

# Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain

*The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News*

## The Vatican Synod on Synodality Meets Resistance

Shaun Willcock

### *What Is It?*

The first Vatican assembly for the global Synod on Synodality, called for by the Roman pope Francis I, officially began in October 2023. It was the first of two planned assemblies, the second one scheduled for October 2024.

A “synod”, according to *Romespeak*, is a meeting of Romish bishops gathered to discuss a topic of theological or pastoral significance, and to prepare a document of advice or counsel to the Roman pope. The 2023 Synod is a historic one for Rome, because it is the first ever to have voting delegates who are not only bishops. Nearly a third of them are priests, nuns, and deacons. A significant number are “lay” women.

And what, according to *Romespeak*, is “synodality”? In 2018 the Roman Inquisition (today known as the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith) defined synodality as “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the people of God.” A preparatory document described synodality as “the form, the style, and the structure of the Church.” And a later Vatican document stated that synodality is something that “develops from a readiness to enter into a dynamic of constructive, respectful, and prayerful speaking, listening, and dialogue.”<sup>1</sup>

Reading between the lines and all the usual convoluted phraseology in which such documents are couched, the essence of these vague, warm-and-fuzzy definitions is that this synod is for the purpose of moving the global Roman Catholic population in a new direction; changing the very structure of the Roman Catholic institution so as to embrace new heresies. When Vatican movers and shakers yap on about the people needing to “listen” and “dialogue”, this is merely for the people’s consumption: *the way forward has already been decided upon by the Jesuits controlling the Vatican*, and all this talk of “listening” and “dialogue” is just to make the people feel they have played an active role in the process. In reality, what they believe or wish for is utterly irrelevant. They are there to provide a pretence of “inclusivity”; of there having been “consultations”.

This is further borne out by another statement from the Vatican document: “At the root of this process is the acceptance, both personal and communal, of something that is both a gift and a challenge: to be a Church of sisters and brothers in Christ who listen to one another and who, in so doing, are gradually transformed by the Spirit.” Again, a reference to “listening to one another”. If Rome “never changes” – as she has always boasted – why do Roman Catholics now have to “listen to one another”? It is very obvious that they are being softened up for what is to come, if the Jesuits get their way: massive changes to both the doctrine and practice of the Roman Catholic institution, to make it fit in with a very changed world.

Rome claims that by listening to one another, Roman Catholics will be “gradually transformed by the Spirit.” In other words, the Vatican knows that it will not be able to simply force the vast Roman Catholic population of the world to accept the radical changes it wants to institute without there being a massive backlash from traditionalists and conservatives. It has to work gradually, one step at a time; and the Jesuits couch this in the terminology of “transformation by the Holy Spirit.” The implication being: how can Roman Catholics argue with the Holy Spirit?

Rome is desperate to transform itself to fit in with a very radicalised, “progressive”, liberal, Socialist

world. It knows that huge changes have to be made, or it will be left behind. But it has to act cautiously and gradually, so as not to alarm the faithful. Far better to deceive them into thinking they are part of a process of Holy Spirit-led transformation!

## ***Massive Changes are Planned***

The guiding document of the Synod is called *Instrumentum Laboris*. What the delegates are required to deal with are such burning issues as women deacons, priestly celibacy, and LGBTQ outreach.

The Jesuit-controlled Vatican of Francis is firmly guiding the entire process down a predetermined path. This is true for everything about the Synod. For example, the pre-Synod retreat for participants was led by a Dominican priest, Timothy Radcliffe, who is pro-sodomy; and the cardinal archbishop of Luxembourg, a Jesuit named Jean-Claude Hollerich who is one of the leading organisers, said that he believes a future pope could allow women priests, and that he finds that part of Roman Catholic doctrine which states that sodomy is “intrinsically disordered” to be “a bit dubious”; and then there is a cardinal named Mario Grech, secretary general for the Synod of Bishops, who said that divorced and remarried Roman Catholics could receive the mass in certain cases.<sup>2</sup>

It is only too obvious that this “Synod on Synodality” is being carefully scripted and controlled by leading liberal/Socialist radicals within the hierarchy, men who are longing to see Rome embrace sodomy, priestesses, and other “progressive” causes. Any traditionalist, conservative Roman Catholic participants are going to be steamrollered along – and afterwards they will be told that after “listening” and “dialogue” and the “transformation of the Holy Spirit”, their views are rejected because the “Spirit” wants Rome to embrace what it formerly rejected and swing radically leftward.

## ***Francis Meets Resistance from Some Traditionalist Cardinals***

In July, three months before the Synod began, five cardinals – so-called “princes of the Church” – sent a set of questions to Francis, to express their concerns and to seek clarification on points of doctrine and discipline. These five questions were called “dubia”, which in Romish teaching are formal questions brought to the pope and to the Inquisition aimed at eliciting a “yes” or “no” response, nothing more. “Dubia” is the plural of “dubium”, meaning “doubt” in Latin.

All five cardinals had been publicly critical of Francis in the past. The five questions they asked him related to doctrinal development, the blessing of sodomite unions, the authority of the Synod, women’s ordination, and sacramental absolution. Francis replied to the dubia with full answers rather than the traditional “yes” and “no” replies, so they felt it necessary to submit a revised request for clarification in August. Saying that Francis’ original replies had merely deepened the doubts they had, they declared that they submitted the dubia because various statements by highly placed prelates made in relation to the upcoming Synod were “openly contrary to the constant doctrine and discipline of the Church.”<sup>3</sup> They were absolutely correct. The Jesuits, assisted by various other liberal/radical prelates, were doing their utmost to force the global Roman Catholic institution to change its doctrinal stance on certain red-hot issues.

When they sent their dubia again, Francis did not reply, with the cardinal-prefect for the Inquisition, Victor Manuel Fernández, arrogantly telling a newspaper, “And now they publish new questions as if the pope were their slave for running errands.”<sup>4</sup> Yet papal “yes” and “no” answers were what dubia documents required – and it surely would have taken Francis nothing more than a few short minutes to give such one-word answers. How hard could it be?

With all this going on, in early October, just days before the Synod commenced, the cardinals decided to make the questions they had asked public; and in response the Vatican decided to publish Francis’ responses to their original dubia in July.<sup>5</sup>

The first dubium concerned the claim made by some liberal/radical bishops that divine revelation “should be reinterpreted according to the cultural changes of our time”. The cardinals asked: “Is it possible for the Church today to teach doctrines contrary to those she has previously taught in matters

of faith and morals, whether by the pope ex cathedra, or in the definitions of an Ecumenical Council or in the ordinary universal magisterium of the bishops dispersed throughout the world?” Official Popish doctrine says no – but this is precisely what the Jesuits believe needs to be done, or risk losing all influence in the modern world! And they are going all-out to find a way to do it.

Francis replied: “Divine Revelation is immutable and always binding.” *But* (there is always a “but” with the Jesuits!) he added, “the Church must be humble and recognise that it never exhausts its unfathomable wealth and needs to grow in its understanding.” “Therefore, she also matures in the understanding of what she herself has affirmed in her magisterium.” “Cultural changes and new challenges of history do not modify Revelation, but they do encourage us to better explain some aspects of its boundless richness which always offer more.” A truly *Jesuitical* answer! First he restates official doctrine; but then he adds that Rome needs to “grow in understanding” of what it has declared (which to a Jesuit means: make changes where needed).

Emphasising his point, he went on: “the texts of Scripture and the testimonies of tradition need an interpretation that allows us to distinguish their perennial substance from cultural conditioning.” In other words, the Jesuit way of approaching this is to say in essence, “Yes, there is a perennial substance to Roman Catholic teaching; but at the same time cultural conditioning must play a part in *bending* the perennial teaching when necessary.”

Pushing his point still further so as to leave no doubt, Francis continued: “a single formulation of a truth can never be adequately understood if it is presented in isolation, isolated from the rich and harmonious context of the whole of revelation. The ‘hierarchy of truths’ also implies situating each of them in adequate connection with the more central truths and with the totality of the Church’s teaching. This can ultimately give rise to different ways of expounding the same doctrine.” This statement would warm the heart of every scheming Jesuit casuist! “Different ways of expounding the same doctrine” could conceivably mean, for example, that while for some marriage must be understood as between a man and a woman, in another cultural context (such as in the modern western world) it could mean between two men. Ultimately, then, “truth” (as the Jesuits view it) is fluid, changeable according to culture, time, place, etc., etc.

The second dubium concerned the blessing of sodomite “unions”. The cardinals asked Francis if the “Church” can deviate from traditional Roman Catholic teaching concerning marriage being between a man and a woman, and accept “as a possible ‘good’ objectively sinful situations, such as same-sex unions, without betraying revealed doctrine?” The cardinals were simply stating official Popish doctrine: sodomite “unions” are sinful.

But Francis had an answer. In his response he declared that equating marriage with the blessing of same-sex couples would give rise to confusion, and should therefore be avoided. However, although out of one side of his mouth he said that marriage was an “exclusive, stable and indissoluble union between a man and a woman, naturally open to conceiving children,” out of the other side of his mouth he added (there is the “but” again!), “In dealing with people, however, we must not lose the pastoral charity that must permeate all our decisions and attitudes. The defence of objective truth is not the only expression of this charity, which is also made up of kindness, patience, understanding, tenderness, encouragement. Therefore, we cannot become judges who only deny, reject, and exclude. For this reason, pastoral prudence must adequately discern if there are forms of blessing, solicited by one or various persons, that do not transmit a mistaken concept of marriage.” Again, truly *Jesuitical*: truth must be defended, but it must at times be set aside for reasons of “charity”!

Expanding further, he said that “the life of the Church runs through many channels in addition to regulatory frameworks”, so that decisions made in specific circumstances should not necessarily become a norm regulated by a diocese or bishops’ conference.<sup>6</sup> In other words, there may be exceptions to the usual official Romish teaching and practice, as long as it does not become a regular habit. Incredible! And he actually had the audacity to add that they had to guard against “an intolerable casuistry”! Imagine it: a Jesuit casuist warning about casuistry! They are nothing if not brazen, the Jesuits.

It is very obvious, from this and so many other pro-sodomite statements he has made over the years,

that what Francis hopes will happen is that the “Church” of Rome will create a “blessing” for sodomite unions. It will not be marriage, but something parallel to marriage. This was also made abundantly clear from the title of the article in the Jesuit magazine, *America*: “Pope Francis expresses openness to same-sex blessings in response to cardinal critics.”<sup>7</sup>

For an example of the use of complicated words and sentences to cause heads to spin and give the impression that a great and profound truth is being stated, which sufficiently awes many into thinking the issue is so complex that only the pope and his Jesuits can properly understand it, read this part of Francis’ answer: “On the other hand, although there are situations that from an objective point of view are not morally acceptable, pastoral charity itself demands that we do not simply treat as ‘sinners’ other people whose guilt or responsibility may be due to their own fault or responsibility attenuated by various factors that influence subjective imputability.” To which most would respond with, “Huh?”

This answer was far from satisfactory to the traditionalist cardinals, for Francis was being typically cagey and Jesuitical in this reply. As always, as all Jesuits do, he was seeking to be “all things to all men”. The cardinals pointed out that “the blessing of same-sex couples might create confusion in any case, not only in that it might make them seem analogous to marriage, but also in that homosexual acts would be presented practically as a good, or at least as the possible good that God asks of people in their journey toward him.” This is *exactly* what will happen if the Vatican officially proclaims that sodomite unions can be “blessed” by priests.

So in their rephrased dubium they asked him if it were possible, in some circumstances, for a priest to bless sodomite unions, “thus suggesting that homosexual behaviour as such would not be contrary to God’s law and the person’s journey towards God”? They also asked if Rome’s teaching is still valid, which states that “every sexual act outside of marriage, and in particular homosexual acts, constitutes an objectively grave sin against God’s law”? To this rephrased dubium they received no response.

The third dubium was about whether or not the Synod, given the fact that it included only a representation of bishops and people and did not represent the entire college of bishops, could exercise the supreme authority of the “Church”, which according to Romish law belongs exclusively to the pope and the college of bishops. To this Francis replied that synodality “is an essential dimension in the life of the Church”. He was, as usual, cagey in his reply, saying things like: “not only the hierarchy but all the people of God in different ways and at different levels can make their voice heard and feel part of the Church’s journey. In this sense we can say that synodality, as a style and dynamism, is an essential dimension of the life of the Church.” Bottom line: he did not directly answer their question. He dodged it.

The fourth dubium addressed statements made by some prelates, which had neither been corrected nor retracted, which asserted that the “Church’s” theology had changed, so that women could now be ordained as priests. The cardinals asked Francis if the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and of Pope John Paul II in his *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, which *definitively stated* that women could *not* be ordained, was still valid, so that this teaching was no longer subject to change, nor to the free discussion of priests and theologians. Put another way, they were asking if this issue was truly settled and not therefore up for discussion, as in fact the official “Church” documents said.

We again see Francis’ Jesuitical subtlety in his reply: on the one hand he said that the doctrine is settled, but on the other hand he said, “let us recognise that a clear and authoritative doctrine has not yet been exhaustively developed about the exact nature of a ‘definitive statement.’ It is not a dogmatic definition, and yet it must be observed by all. No one can publicly contradict it and yet it can be the object of study”.

To this the cardinals responded, “We are concerned that some may interpret this statement to mean that the matter has not yet been decided in a definitive manner.” This is *precisely* how Francis’ words could be interpreted – and precisely how he wanted them to be. Knowing that he could not *directly* contradict the words of John Paul II and of Vatican II, with serpentine cunning he said that what exactly is meant by a “definitive statement” had not yet been fully developed! In this way, he hoped to have found a loophole enabling a change to eventually be made on the matter of women priests.

So the cardinals reformulated their question as follows: “Could the Church in the future have the faculty to confer priestly ordination on women, thus contradicting that the exclusive reservation of this sacrament to baptized males belongs to the very substance of the sacrament of orders, which the Church cannot change?” Francis made no further reply.

The fifth and final dubium was to do with Francis’ frequent assertion that a priest in the confessional has the duty to absolve everyone and at all times, without penitence being necessary for absolution (again, utterly contrary to Roman Catholic doctrine!). The cardinals’ question was whether or not, according to the official teaching of the Council of Trent, the penitent’s contrition remained necessary for the validity of confession, “so that the priest must postpone absolution when it is clear that this condition is not fulfilled.” In his reply Francis said that although “repentance is necessary for the validity of sacramental absolution, and implies the purpose of not sinning... [nevertheless] There are many ways to express regret. Often, in people who have a very wounded self-esteem, pleading guilty is a cruel torture, but the very act of approaching confession is a symbolic expression of repentance and seeking divine help... [Therefore] we should not demand from the faithful overly precise and certain proposals of amendment, which in the end turn out to be abstract or even egotistical.”<sup>8</sup> A “but”, again! This man is the arch-weasel. He can slither out of anything. See how he got out of this one – saying that, for example, people with “low self-esteem” might feel “tortured” if they have to plead guilty to sin! And saying that there are many ways to express regret!

When one understands Jesuitism, one can understand this reply from the Roman pope. The Jesuits have always been lenient in the confessional. This is a well-known fact. In this way many Roman Catholics have preferred to go to confession to a Jesuit priest. The Jesuits, on their part, thereby exert a greater influence over the people. They are seen as being less strict, more understanding, etc. Francis was merely expressing Jesuit teaching on absolution when he replied this way.

Take careful note of how Francis responded, and indeed of how he always speaks: he does not give a straightforward answer. There is always a “but”, a “though”, a “however”. First he states the official Papist doctrine – but then immediately adds a Jesuitical interpretation of it which enables him to leave some wriggle room, some way out of the hard-and-fast confines of dogma. The Jesuits are masters at this. Only they, of all the Roman Catholic orders, give lip service to official doctrine, but then frame it in such a way that the impression is given there is some fluidity about it, or some exception, or some special interpretation in special cases which differs from the official line.

This typical Jesuit approach was admitted in the Jesuit magazine, *America*, in an article entitled “Same-sex blessings, women’s ordination and whether doctrine can change: What Pope Francis said to the ‘dubia’ cardinals.” The article concluded as follows: “And the synod’s deliberations will almost definitely not result in a definite ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ just as Pope Francis’ decisions after the synod will likely take on the form of his responses to the dubia: affirming church teaching and discerning what is, as he wrote to the cardinals, ‘pastorally prudent.’ In other words, the synod, like the pope, does not work in terms of ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ but, as synod spiritual director Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., said in his opening address to the synod participants’ retreat this weekend, in terms of ‘yes, and.’”<sup>9</sup>

Think about that! “*Yes, and.*” This is a succinct summary of the Jesuit doctrine being now forced upon the entire Roman Catholic institution. A “yes” to official doctrine, but always an “and”, a “but”, an exception, an addendum. Truly, the Jesuits are (in the wrong sense) “all things to all men.”

## ***A Cardinal Accuses the Synod Organisers of Under-Handedness***

On 21 September, just days before the Synod opened, a letter from a cardinal named Joseph Zen was leaked to the media, in which he expressed grave concerns about the Synod to cardinals and bishops worldwide. He accused the Synod organisers of manipulation, and of pursuing an agenda.<sup>10</sup> He was right.

He was very critical of the so-called German Synodal Way. This was the ecclesiastical process in Germany which led to German ecclesiastics voting in favour of women priests, same-sex blessings,

etc., in flagrant violation of official Popish doctrine. What few are aware of, however, is that the Vatican of Francis was *allowing* the German hierarchy to push ahead with these radical changes, to test the waters and see what kind of pushback there would be from priests and people around the world. Rome was using the German experiment as a test case, to see what it could eventually get away with imposing on the entire Roman Catholic institution globally.

Cunningly, although Francis at times expressed concerns about what was happening in Germany, he never ordered the process to cease, as Zen pointed out in his letter – a clear indication of Francis’ secret support for the German Synodal Way.

Zen accused the Synod Secretariat, the Vatican office responsible for organising the Synod on Synodality, of questionable conduct, writing: “The Synod Secretariat is very efficient at the art of manipulation. Often they claim not to have any agenda. This is truly an offence to our intelligence. Anyone can see which conclusions they are aiming at.” He could see it, conservative cardinals, bishops and priests could see it, millions of Roman Catholics across the world could see it. The Francis Vatican was deliberately pushing a “progressive”, radical Marxist agenda that, if accepted, will fundamentally change the worldwide Roman Catholic “Church”.

Zen wrote: “Little by little they [the organisers of the Synod] make us understand that among these ‘all’ [that they claim to listen to] there are especially those whom we [traditionalists] have ‘excluded.’ Finally, we understand that what they mean are people who opt for a sexual morality different from that of Catholic tradition.” Although the organisers claimed they wanted to listen to everyone, they were only really interested in listening to LGBT advocates, who say they feel “excluded” by traditionalist Roman Catholics. The Francis Vatican is doing everything it can to change Popish doctrine and practice so as to include LGBT people – even at the risk of alienating its traditional base of ordinary Roman Catholics.

## ***Francis Also Meets Resistance from Traditionalist Roman Catholic Women***

It is not only traditionalist and conservative cardinals who are deeply concerned about the Synod, but many devout traditionalist and conservative Roman Catholic women as well. A large group of these women issued a statement entitled, “Declaration of Catholic Women to Bishops on the ‘Synod of Synodality.’” It was published on 30 September – just days before the Synod opened – and signed by over 600 women.

In the letter they wrote: “As Catholic women who practice the Faith and believe all that Holy Mother Church teaches, we wish to be represented only by bishops, to whom Christ entrusted the governance and leadership of His Church, and only insofar as they believe and profess the Church’s faith.” “We and our families, and indeed all Catholic laity, have a right to orthodox doctrine and faithful preaching from the pastors of the Church.”<sup>11</sup> They were committed to traditional Roman Catholic teaching, and rejected the idea of priestesses, warning that the Synod poses a danger to the dignity and role of women in the “Church” of Rome.

One of the signatories, Dr Janet Smith, a Romish theologian, said, “[Francis is] very happy to hear from women on the Left, but is he willing to hear from more traditional women?” She was right: Francis always paid attention to leftist-leaning women, but mostly ignored those who hold to traditional Popish theology. The letter stated: “Suggestions have even been made that the ‘structures’ of the Church be ‘reformed’ so that women might participate in ‘governance’ and that ‘women’s inclusion in the diaconate’ be considered.” The women signatories to this letter were totally opposed to this. It went on: “Female participants whom Pope Francis has appointed have advocated heretical doctrines and espouse views contrary to the Catholic faith.”

One of these is Julia Oseka, who, despite being only 22 years old and a student, was chosen to be one of the non-bishops who would be allowed to vote at the Synod. Oseka is a liberal who believes that women and so-called LGBT people should have greater roles in the “Church” of Rome – contrary to Romish teaching. Dr Smith pointed out: “And to think that an individual of that age would have any influence on long-standing teaching of the Church... is preposterous.” Not that we in anyway support

traditional Romish doctrine – but this was just a further indication of how the world is being increasingly run by young people. One just has to think of the immense political clout an arrogant youngster like Greta Thunberg has on the world stage. But Francis, the Jesuits, and other liberal/radical priests and bishops of Rome are doing this because they want to make the “Church” attractive and relevant to young people, even if they have to jettison centuries-old doctrine to achieve this.

The letter stated: “In recent times the moral authority of the Catholic Church appears to have been co-opted by the spirit of the world, and her voice silenced on matters that threaten the lives and eternal salvation especially of the young.” The tragedy of this statement is that these poor women, although they have partly seen through what the Jesuit-controlled Vatican of today is doing, do not see that the Roman Catholic institution *never* had any true moral authority in the world, for it has always been an iniquitous religio-political system. The “spirit of the world” has dominated Popery ever since it began! But today, that spirit is moving the Papal system to embrace things it once condemned.

The letter by these concerned women was correct when it cited the damage done to children by new gender ideologies and experimental gene therapy drugs and procedures; and when they added, “Many of those entrusted with the preservation and propagation of the Deposit of Faith are more preoccupied with ‘nonjudgmental’ acceptance of those who indulge in and promote these practices that with protecting the innocent from the predators who seek to corrupt and destroy.” Again, they were absolutely correct about what liberal/radical priests were focusing on today. But sadly, the priests of Rome have *never* proclaimed or preserved the *true* deposit of faith, the Gospel of Christ, because Popery has *never* been Christian.

### ***And So the Synod Began...***

Francis opened the Synod with a mass on 4 October 2023; and in his opening address he made it clear what was happening: “This welcoming gaze of Jesus also invites us to be a welcoming Church, not one with closed doors. In such a complex time as ours, new cultural and pastoral challenges emerge that call for a warm and kindly inner attitude so that we encounter each other without fear.... A Church... which does not impose burdens... The doors of the Church are open to everyone, everyone, everyone!”<sup>12</sup>

This sums up what the Jesuits are attempting to do. They know that the modern world has changed drastically, in morals and outlook, from what it was even a couple of decades ago. All kinds of sins are now embraced as “alternative lifestyles”, and governments are even punishing those who oppose these changes. In addition, the modern world frowns on religious dogmatism. It wants religion to be a warm and fuzzy, feel-good thing. The Jesuits and others within the hierarchy have come to the conclusion that the only way for Rome to remain relevant in the world is to radically alter its teachings and accommodate these changes in society. So the Jesuit pope emphasises that “the doors of the Church are open to everyone, everyone, everyone!” Suddenly, Rome is declaring itself to be welcoming to all, to condemn none and embrace all lifestyles. Unbending doctrine and dogma are now to be downplayed or “re-interpreted” to meet modern challenges. From this moment forth, they want Rome to be welcoming, non-condemnatory, smiling, warm, all-embracing. Sin is no longer to be emphasised; what matters now is making the “Church” of Rome into a home for every deviant, every heresy, every abominable behaviour. All will be welcomed with open arms – *except* those who try to hold on to traditional Roman Catholic teaching and practice. Suddenly, multiplied millions of the Roman Catholic faithful have been cast aside. The Papal system may soon be turned upside-down. All in the name of inclusivity and non-judgmentalism.

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For a previous and related article by Shaun Willcock, see *Are Huge Changes on the Horizon for the Papal System?* <https://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk/2023/08/23/are-huge-changes-on-the-horizon-for-the-papal-system/>



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### ENDNOTES:

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6. *America*, October 2, 2023, and *Zenit.org*, October 2, 2023.
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