

Homily 29th Sunday Year B 2021 Synodality

Pope Francis is calling us as to journey together into a deeper experience of and commitment to God in order to fulfil our role as **missionary disciples**. The Synodal process or synodality is characterized by three key elements: **Communion, Participation, & Mission.**

Communion: Although spread across many dioceses, God unites us as one. Our aim is not for all of us to be the same, but for us to walk forward together, sharing a common path and embracing our diversity – diversity is good. The communion that God builds among us is stronger than any divisions there are or the evil one dares to inflict on us. Amidst many differences, we are united in our common baptism as members of the Body of Christ. Our communion exists on various levels: in parishes, in renewal opportunities, in numerous lay organizations, and in families/households of faith, in Consecrated Persons, and in the Clergy.

Participation: The lay faithful, households of faith/family units, Consecrated People and Clergy all play a vital role in the life of the Church. Pope Francis calls all of us to participate more fully on the synodal journey he invites us to initiate. We need to make every effort to include those who are or feel excluded — including members of other Christian denominations, other religions, people experiencing poverty and marginalization, people who live with a handicap, young people, women, etc. We must all reach out, in coming months, to include those who might feel they are on the peripheries, and include them on the journey. We must invite them to be included.

Mission: The many gifts and charisms of the People of God need to be acknowledged and drawn upon. Every Christian has a vital role in the mission of the Church—all the baptized are living stones helping build up the Body of Christ. No one is excluded from the joy of the Gospel. Lay people have a special mission in witnessing to the Gospel in all parts of human society. As disciples of Jesus, we are leaven in the midst of humanity so that the kingdom of God may rise and be more evident across the entire world.

The Synodal process is a worldwide consultation which involves **listening, discernment, and participation** but it is first and foremost a **spiritual process** – NOT a mechanical data gathering exercise or a series of meetings and debates. It involves listening oriented toward **discernment** – personal and communal discernment. We listen to each other, to our faith tradition, and to the signs of the times in order to discern what God is saying to us. This discernment is ultimately **a way of life**, grounded in Christ, following the lead of the Holy Spirit and living for the greater glory of God.

This Communal Discernment will help us build flourishing and resilient communities for the mission of the Church today.

We do not know where the path will take us but it is a journey we will make trusting the Holy Spirit to guide us along the way that God wants and with a belief that God knows best!

A couple were on a Christmas shopping spree when the wife lost her husband completely. Growing increasingly worried, she called him on her mobile and asked where he was.

In a quiet voice, he said: *“Do you remember the jewellers we went into five years ago, where you fell in love with that diamond necklace that we couldn’t afford, and I told you that I would get it for you one day?”*

The wife choked up and started to cry and said *“Yes, I do remember that shop.”*

He replied *“Well! I’m in the pub next door!”*