

Message for Sunday of the Word of God

January 22, 2023

Synodality and the Word of God

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Regional Biblical Commission, would like to greet and address you on this Sunday of the Word of God which the Holy Father inaugurated three years ago with the sole purpose of setting aside “a Sunday given over entirely to the word of God, so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people”.

In the meantime, the Pope, aware of the problems that beset the Church today, has launched a two-year process of returning to the Church’s early, habitual way of proceeding called ‘Synodality’ which means ‘walking together’. While problems of abuse, discontent, dissent and non-involvement of many of the faithful prevail in the Church, this process of ‘journeying together’ is meant to awaken the whole Church as the People of God to a brighter future of hope and joy.

The Bible recounts continuously this journey of the people of God: from the wandering Aramean who migrated to Egypt (Dt 26:5-10), to the Exodus, to the disciples at Emmaus (Lk 24:13f), until the missionary outreach in the Mediterranean world and Asia Minor. The nascent Church, whose adherents were even called “followers of the Way” (Acts 9:2), was conscious of these communal experiences especially in arriving at crucial decisions for the converted non-Jews at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). This journeying together, in listening to the lived-experiences of the disciples, especially of Peter and Paul, helped in arriving at a solution for the whole Church.

Synodality, therefore, calls for a culture of listening and dialogue. It is this listening to one another and to the Word of God that helped the People of God to discern what the Spirit was saying to the Churches. “The Spirit, according to the Lord’s promise, does not limit himself to confirming the continuity of the Gospel of Jesus, but will illuminate the ever- new depths of his Revelation and inspire the decisions necessary to sustain the Church’s journey” (Synod Preparatory Document 16). This process will eventually draw us towards a conversion in communion, participation and mission.

Hence, as a first step, I encourage each and every one of you to prepare the readings before mass for a worthy and a fruitful participation in the Eucharist wherein the Word of God is read and shared in the homily during a community celebration. Try to join and participate in bible-sharing groups which help to see the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit piercing through thoughts and emotions and bringing about a communal conversion of heart and mind. Let this Word of God Sunday move the Church forward in a synodal way “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds and weave together relationships, and awaken a dawn of hope...” (PD 32).

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