



SYNODALITY



Knights of the Southern Cross Formation Program 2022

SESSION 2

The Pathway to Synodality

It is the Lord Jesus who presents Himself as ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (*Jn 14:6*), and Christians, His followers, were originally called ‘followers of the Way’ (cf. *Acts 9:2; 19,9.23; 22,4; 24,14.22*). In the first millennium, “journeying together”—that is, practising synodality—was the ordinary way in which the Church, understood as “People united in the unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” acted. Synodality, in this perspective, is much more than the celebration of ecclesial meetings and Bishops’ assemblies, or a matter of simple internal administration within the Church; it is “the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelizing mission.

Pope Francis has long called for a more "synodal" Church, that is, a church ‘which listens, which realises that listening is more than simply hearing’. ‘It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth’(Evangelli Gaudium 171)

Let us remind ourselves of the context in which this present Synod is taking place – a global pandemic, local and international conflicts, growing impact of climate change, migration, various forms of injustice, racism, violence, persecution, and increasing inequalities across humanity, to name a few. In the Church, the context is also marked by the suffering experienced by minors and vulnerable people due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power, and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons.

A global tragedy such as the COVID-19 pandemic “momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person’s problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together” (FT, no. 32). At the same time, the pandemic has also made the already existing inequalities and inequities explode humanity seems increasingly shaken by processes of massification and fragmentation; the tragic condition faced by migrants in all regions of the world shows how high and strong the barriers dividing the single human family still are. The Encyclicals *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli Tutti* document the depth of the fault lines that run through humanity. (Ls 13)

So, we find ourselves at a crucial moment in the life of the Church and the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has made existing inequalities explode. At the same time, this global crisis has revived our sense that we are all in the same boat, and that “one person’s problems are the problems of all” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 32). The context of the COVID-19 pandemic will surely affect the unfolding of the Synodal Process. This global pandemic creates real logistical challenges, but also offers an opportunity to promote the revitalization of the Church at a critical time in human history, when many local Churches are facing various questions about the path forward.

In October 2015, Pope Francis declared that “the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all



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areas of her mission.” This call to cooperate in the mission of the Church is addressed to the entire People of God. Pope Francis made this clear when he issued a direct invitation to all the People of God to contribute to Church efforts towards healing. Amid this context, synodality represents the path by which the Church can be renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit, listening together to what God has to say to his people. Synodality ought to be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working.

The current Synodal Process we are undertaking is guided by a fundamental question: How does this “journeying together” take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel?

In creating the opportunity for listening and dialogue on the local level and in groups such as KSC, through this Synod Pope Francis is calling the Church to rediscover its deeply synodal nature. This rediscovery of the synodal roots of the Church will involve a process of humbly learning together how God is calling us to be, as the Church in the third millennium.

Therefore, following on from the “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council, and reflecting together on the journey that has been made since that time, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission. These are the three components of the theme the Pope has indicated in the theme of this Synod.

Reflection

- 1 How does this “journeying together” take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel?
- 2 How might members of the KSC ensure a pathway to synodality within their groups of influence?
- 3 As a member of KSC, what is the main thought about synodality you will take to heart from this session? Discuss with others. Is there divided opinion? Does a main thought emerge?

Prayer: So then, together, listening to the Holy Spirit, let us be led by God, as we pray

**We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts.
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.**

**We are weak and sinful.
Do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance
lead us down the wrong path**

nor partiality influence our actions.

**Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together
to eternal life and not stray
from the way of truth and what is right.**

**All this we ask of You, who are at work in
every place and time, in the communion of
the Father and the Son, forever and ever.
Amen**