



APORTES PARA EL SINODO

LUGARES

ENGLISH

For a synodal Church that goes out to the peripheries

The Church is the people of God, a community of followers of Jesus of Nazareth, and its mission is the same as that of the Master: to make the Kingdom of God present in the world (see EG 176). The members of this community have equal dignity, it is a single family that concretely assumes the will of the Father (see Mk 3:35; Mt 12:50; Lk 8:21). In it, titles do not matter, being called masters, guides or father, because all are brothers and sisters (see Mt 23:8-12). We form one body of Christ, "since we were all baptized in one Spirit to become one body" (1 Cor 12:13). Therefore, each member is important and must use his or her gifts to serve the community. Therefore, synodality, walking together as the people of God, is something constitutive of the being of the Church and of its mission. We are only the Church of Jesus walking together to realize the Kingdom of God. But in its historical pilgrimage, the Church faces challenges, limitations, sins. This requires that it is in a constant state of renewal. Not for fashion, but to be ever more faithful to the Gospel. Now we perceive two great challenges in this synodal path that we are following: 1) to overcome a monarchical style that concentrates power and decisions and 2) to overcome the self-referentiality that closes the Church in on itself, keeping it far from poverty and the poor. Only by facing these challenges will we assume a truly synodal style that goes out to the peripheries.

Regarding the first point, the Instrumentum Laboris (IL) has already reminded us that "the fact that 'with episcopal consecration the fullness of the sacrament of Orders is conferred' (LG 21) is not the justification for an episcopal ministry that tends to be 'monarchical'" (IL 38). The path that the Lord asks of us is another; it occurs by "moving from a pyramidal mode of exercising authority to a synodal mode" (IL 36). It is not an easy mission. Therefore, speaking to the faithful in Rome (18.09.2021), Pope Francis stated that "there is much resistance to overcoming the image of a Church rigidly divided between leaders and subordinates, between those who teach and those who must learn... The synodal Church restores the horizon from which the sun Christ rises: erecting hierarchical monuments means covering it". The Church does not identify with any political regime. It is not a democracy, much less a monarchy. It is the People of God who live in communion founded on the love of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, the ordained ministry, like all ministries in the Church, must be seen in the logic of service. While the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest (see Mk 9:33-37), Jesus takes a child, places him at the center and says that whoever welcomes him, welcomes Himself and whoever wants to be first must be the servant of all. With this he emphasizes that the disciples should not become protagonists of disputes for power nor want to dominate others, but everyone should place themselves as servants.

This text also helps us understand the second challenge: overcoming self-referentiality. Jesus takes a child, symbol of all the little ones and the excluded, and places him at the center; he also says that whoever welcomes him will welcome Him and the Father. We must go out of ourselves to welcome Christ in the little ones and put them at the center of our pastoral care. The Church does not exist for itself. It is not about organizing events and carrying out religious activities, however important they may be. Even if we had a Church where everyone participates in its organization and its pastoral care, if it does not commit to transforming the world so that it is more just and fraternal as God wants, we will not have a synodal Church. We will have a more participatory Church, but not a synodal one. "Like the moon, the Church shines with reflected light: she cannot therefore understand her mission in a self-

referential sense, but has the responsibility of being a sacrament of union, relationship and communion for the unity of the entire human race.... the Church is the sacrament of the Kingdom of God in the world" (IL 4). And being this sacrament of the Kingdom means going out to the peripheries and listening to the poor and the excluded (see IL 12, 20, 33, 54, 93). This is why Pope Francis says: "I desire a poor Church for the poor... The new evangelization is an invitation to recognize the saving power of their lives, and to place them at the center of the Church's journey. We are called to discover Christ in them" (EG 198). Synodality is not walking in any place, but rather a way out to the peripheries. It is being servants of the Kingdom that we are called to make present in the world. May the Synod help us to be more and more a Church of brothers and sisters who walk together towards the peripheries, serving Christ in the poor, working for the Kingdom of God and His justice!