

Synodality, Co-Responsibility, and Vatican II

Synod = “the way together”

Collegiality between the Pope and the Bishops of the world. Now also extended to collegiality within the Diocese and with the laity. Your synod next year is an example of this.

Stems from ideas such as our common baptismal call; the Church as the entire People of God

1. Principles/theological concepts that might help guide us:

- Human dignity and equal dignity of women
- Discipleship of equals
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on all the **People of God**
- **Baptism:** *Sacrosanctum Concilium* – article 14 refers to the full participation of the baptized in liturgy as both a *right* and an *obligation*. Begin with *what unites us* – primary identity as Christians is not lay/clerical but as baptized.

➤ Subsidiarity:

Introduced into CST by Pius XI.

Pius XII: 1946 he said that this principle is “valid for social life in all its grades” was also valid for the life of the Church without prejudice to its hierarchical structure”

Richard Gaillardetz: “Positively, subsidiarity affirms the obligations of more comprehensive church entities to assist both smaller communities and individual persons in the realization of their proper goals. Negatively, it precludes, under ordinary circumstances, those large or more comprehensive church structures from interfering in the affairs of individuals or smaller communities” (*The Church in the Making*, p.81).

“The realization of the legitimate Christian goals of individual persons and local Christian communities must be supported by ‘higher’ or more comprehensive levels of personal and communal life, such that the ‘lower’ or less comprehensive levels of personal and communal life must have primary responsibility for addressing particular ecclesial issues. Only when these issues appear insoluble at the lower level and/or threaten the faith and unity of the church universal should one expect intervention from higher levels of church life” (Gaillardetz, p.81)

➤ Principle of participation:

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* describes participation as “ a series of activities by means of which the citizen contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which [she] belongs” (n. 189). It goes on to explain that participation is a cornerstone of “all democratic orders and one of the major guarantees of the permanence of the democratic system” (n.190).

Padraig Corkery: “because participation is a basic right that contributes to the common good of society there is a duty on all to challenge attitudes and structures that work against participation” (Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, p.77).

But how might we apply the principle of participation to the internal life of the Church?
(The Church *ad intra*)

How might your Synod work as an expression of this?

2. Vatican II: Pilgrim Church, People of God

Why the sea-change at Vatican II?

Results of Vatican II?

Greater confidence in the human person, and recognition of the competence of the laity.

Responsibility on all the people of God

Universal call to holiness

“It is their task to cultivate a properly informed conscience and to impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city. For guidance and spiritual strength let them turn to the clergy; but let them realise that their pastors will not always be so expert as to have a ready answer to every problem (even every grave problem) that arises; this is not the role of the clergy: it is rather up to the laymen to shoulder their responsibilities under the guidance of Christian wisdom and with eager attention to the teaching authority of the Church” (GS, 43).

3. The idea of Co-responsibility and implications for methodology

How do we discern what is the good? Who discerns?

We need to take seriously the idea that it is the whole community who discerns (then entire people of God).

Example: US Bishops

Pastoral letters of the 80's (women, peace, economy).

Consultative methodology

Inclusive. Took seriously the idea that the community as a whole discerns

4. Richard Gula:

Church as: conviction, doubt, discernment (who discerns?), and action

How might we apply these images of Church to your Synod?

Reflection: Timothy Radcliffe

When Jesus ate and drank with tax collectors and prostitutes,
it was not a duty,
It was utter delight in their company,
in their very being.

When he touched the untouchable,
it was not a clinical gesture, but the hug of joy.

So it belongs to our priesthood that we rejoice in the very existence of
people,
with all their fumbling attempts to live and love,
whether they are married or divorced or single,
whether they are straight or gay,
whether their lives are lived in accordance with Church teaching or not.
The Church should be a community in which people discover God's utter
delight in them.