

"Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church"¹

Synod of bishops or Episcopal Communion was founded by St. Pope Paul VI on September 15, 1965. From the past to the present, 15 ordinary general assemblies have been held, the last of which was in 2018 titled "Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, "Christus Vivit", issued at the conclusion of the Assembly at that time, 3 extraordinary assemblies, and more 11 special assemblies and the recent, was in 2018, with the declaration of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation about the environment called "**Querida Amazonia.**"

Pope Francis originally planned the Synod of bishops in October 2022 and issued a document to prepare the Assembly titled "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church." But on Saturday, May 22, 2021, before the Solemnity of the Holy Spirit, Card. Mario Grech, General Secretariat of the Synod, made a statement regarding this Assembly at the Pope's will. This Synod is divided into phases 1) Diocesan level, 2) Continental level, and 3) Universal level. The content of the documents for preparation of the Synod is divided into 4 chapters, which can be summarized as follows:

CHAPTER 1

SYNODALITY IN SCRIPTURE, IN TRADITION, AND IN HISTORY

¹ International Theological Commission, announced on 7 March 2020 by Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html (สืบค้น 5 เมษายน 2021)

God created the perfect and beautiful Garden of Eden for human beings to inhabit. He walked with them in the garden (cf. Gen 2:8). But men who believed more in the serpent than obeyed God were deceived by the serpent. The consequences of sin destroy God's plan with dishonesty and blindness to the vocation. Nonetheless, God has always walked with mankind throughout history to guide, teach, and reveal the truths to mankind. By that, the plan was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, who teaches us to move forward all the time. He is the way (cf. John 14:6), and we walk on it. We and Him or Him and we travel together throughout the history of the Church. He delegated this authority and duty to the Apostles with the Holy Spirit's blessing in his imitation. When there were problems or conflicts, they exchanged ideas, by listening to one another as at the first Assembly in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15 and Gal 2:1-10) and many times throughout the history of the Church, in order to move forward together.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF SYNODALITY

The theological basis of moving together lies in the relationship of the Holy Trinity. The Church is therefore holy, universal, and derives from the Apostles, the work of the Holy Trinity. Based on the Holy Spirit and His blessings that Jesus Christ bestowed on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1-36). In this relationship, the Communion of Saints (Heaven, Earth, and Purgatory) was realized in both the sense of unity and sanctity, which has the vocation to walk towards perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The theological vision of the Church can be defined as three types of population:

1) "All" means the awareness of the faith (Sensus Fidei²) of all faithful people

2) "Some" refers to the bishops along with their bishops

3) "One" means Bishop of Rome or Pope

Restoring the Church's walk together calls for a process of constructive exchange of ideas, and it is necessary to consult with all the people of God because it is for everyone, and anything that affects everyone should be in discussion and approval of everyone on three dimensions of the Church: Faith, Sacraments, and Administration.

CHAPTER 3

IMPLEMENTING SYNODALITY:

SYNODAL SUBJECTS, STRUCTURES, PROCESS, AND EVENTS

With a sense of faith (Sensus Fidei), every faithful should be called to share responsibility by making the blessings of the Holy Spirit manifest in the community of faith and is part of the complete restoration of the Church. Especially experiences of faith, popular piety, pastoral, cultural, social, and personal competence. The vocation of walking together also means listening to the Word of God, understanding the message of faith rationally, consistent with faith and science, discretion in contemplation of the signs of time according to the light of the Gospel, dialogue with society and culture.

² "Sensus fidei" or "Sense of Faithful" according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church or CCC No. 91-93) meanings:

1) Supernatural consciousness or gratitude as a believer, towards participation or ownership in the universal Church

2) By adhering to the Faith, moral rules, and teachings of the Church, which are based on the foundation of the Holy Spirit of truth

3) They will hold on to their Faith uncompromisingly, especially in the depths of their conscience to choose what to do in today's life as the Lord Jesus Christ said, "The gates of Hell will never overcome the Church (Mt 16:18)

4) The Church here refers to the duty of the bishops to not let the faithful detract from their faith

The local Church must be active in celebrating the Eucharist, prayers, the official celebrations of the diocese in which have their bishops as head, surrounded by his priests and deacons, in the context of diocesan history, related cultures, agencies and organizations whose bishops are obliged to hear, consult, discuss, convene and evaluate with them, for the good and benefit of the diocese as a whole, and under the jurisdiction of the bishop. Then, it moves towards unity at the continental and universal levels.

CHAPTER 4

CONVERSION TO RENEW SYNODALITY

Walking together calls for the conversion of the Christian vocation. Having a spirit of unity. The practice of listening to dialogue and contemplation with everyone, based on fraternity, generosity, and leaving no one behind. That means pastoral and missionary repentance in four dimensions: 1) spirituality, 2) attitude, 3) work methods, and 4) action structure that emphasizes everyone's participation and responsibility together according to the principles of "all," "some," and "one."

The Church as the Sacrament is the symbol and instrument of Christ's salvation which calls on everyone to repent. It manifests itself through 1) accepting others, 2) listening to each other's opinions, 3) being generous, and 4) not pretending or wearing masks and become one in the Eucharist.

Therefore, the Church is "Home and School of Unity" that will lead everyone to perfection in Christ by applying a sense of faith (Sensus fidei). ✍