



St Francis of Assisi Parish



REFLECTION

A VISION OF THE SYNODAL CHURCH Based on the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES Please read the ACTS

Holy Father Pope Francis has asked the Universal Church to start praying for the Success of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops due to be held sometime in October 2023. The dioceses all over the World have started to pray. The basic question is “Where is the Spirit leading the Church? (Already being discussed in the Plenary Council of Australia - XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops)

The Theme is SYNODALITY which the Pope says, is God’s Wish for the Church of the Third Millennium.

The meaning of the word SYNODALITY is **journeying together**. What is envisaged is a Church in which all the baptised, laity, priests, religious and bishops, journey together in seeking the way forward as we all respond to our common vocation as “**missionary disciples of Jesus Christ**”.

This Synod is not going to be a one-off event but an extended process in which there is maximum participation of all the faithful, providing ample opportunity for conversations at local, national and continental levels before the Rome meeting in 2023. The three **Focal Points of the upcoming Synod are: MISSION, COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION.**

MISSION: Jesus our Lord gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples so that they could be his witnesses, ambassadors, in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Acts. 1:8. All through the **Acts of the Apostles** we read the story of the Spirit-filled disciples courageously witnessing to the good news of God’s all-inclusive salvation through Jesus Christ. As they faced opposition, they experienced the Holy Spirit empowering them. Acts 5:32.

COMMUNION and Mission are inseparably connected. Communion has to do with how we relate to one another in the Church. The Holy Spirit created a prayerful and discerning community in which there is a great spirit of sharing and practical care for all the poor. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35. If Christian Mission is about promoting a loving, compassionate, forgiving community, then we must be a sign of that by the way we relate to one another in the Church. In a world where people are often divided on the grounds of class, culture, economy, race and view- points we need the witness of Christian Communities in which people live in a mutually enriching way in diverse backgrounds, cultures and view-points.

A Synodal Church will promote **PARTICIPATION** of all in its life and mission. We draw inspiration from the Acts of the Apostles about ministerial structures to meet the Community needs as the community ‘selected seven Spirit-filled persons who were approved by the Apostles’. Acts 6:1-6.

So, **Synodal Church is a listening Church** in which everyone has something to learn and teach. A Synodal Church is a **praying Church** open to hearing the Voice of the Holy Spirit. A Synodal Church recognises and values the variety of roles in the Church where the only authority is the authority of **service**, according to Holy Father Pope Francis.

God bless
Fr Joseph Rathnaraj
Parish Priest

05 December 2021