



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Reflection 2

**FOLLOWING CLELIA'S FOOTSTEPS
TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS**

LISTENING TO THE CRY OF MY FAMILY, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND ALL HUMANITY

To live synodality in the Church means above all that we are to become experts in the art of encounter.

True encounter arises only from listening. Pope Francis says that the listener does not give a non-committal reply, does not pretend to respond politely, simply as a way of dismissing a person and continuing on his way. Listening requires time and an open heart. May this synodal journey, then, be also for all of us an occasion “to understand where we are with our listening, how our hearts are hearing: that is, if we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even if they have difficult life paths, to contribute to the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged.” To make space for listening is to discover with amazement that the Holy Spirit breathes in surprising ways to put forward new paths and new ways of speaking.

The Church is and must be a family, where each member is a gift for the others: men and women, young and old, priests and laity, consecrated men and women. It is one family where all feel responsible for life and for proclaiming the Gospel, sent together to realize the dream of Jesus: “that all may be one.” To be a synodal Church means to live and walk as a family, listening to the cry of all humanity.

LISTENING TO THE WORD AND TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

MARK 10: 17-27 - THE RICH MAN

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.'" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to pass through [the] eye of [a] needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

DIGGING DEEPER (POPE FRANCIS)

A certain rich man came up to Jesus "as he was setting out on his journey" (Mk 10:17). The Gospels frequently show us Jesus "on a journey"; he walks alongside people and listens to the questions and concerns lurking in their hearts. He shows us that God is not found in neat and orderly places, distant from reality, but walks ever at our side. He meets us where we are, on the often rocky roads of life.

Celebrating a Synod means walking on the same road, walking together. Let us look at Jesus. First, he *encounters* the rich man on the road; he then *listens* to his questions, and finally he helps him *discern* what he must do to inherit eternal life. *Encounter, listen and discern*. I would like to reflect on these three verbs that characterize the Synod.

The first is *encounter*. The Gospel passage begins by speaking of an encounter. A man comes up to Jesus and kneels down before him, asking him a crucial question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (v. 17). So important a question requires attention, time, willingness to encounter others and sensitivity to what troubles them.

The Lord does not stand aloof; he does not appear annoyed or disturbed. Instead, he is completely present to this person. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each individual's history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone's life can be changed by a single encounter.

The Gospel is full of such encounters with Christ, encounters that uplift and bring healing. Jesus did not hurry along, or keep looking at his watch to get the meeting over. He was always at the service of the person he was with, listening to what he or she had to say.

SHARING -- TESTIMONIES

IN THE WORDS OF MOTHER CLELIA



“We must do everything in the best way possible. ‘Do everything you do with great perfection,’ the Holy Spirit tells us. To do things negligently and imperfectly when we’ve promised to do them to please God is lack of respect for Him; since the more outstanding a person is, the more what one does for Him must be perfect in all ways.” (SA 2.5, p. 46. Mg.,I, p.11)

REFLECTION

- Jesus listens with the heart. How do you listen? What is the cry of my family and of all people?
- Do we let others express themselves, to walk in faith even if they have difficult life paths, to contribute to the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged?
- As a Christian community, do we incarnate the ways of God, who walks with us through history and shares our human experience? Are we ready for the adventure of journeying or, fearful of the unknown, do we prefer to hide behind the excuse of “it’s not needed” or “we have always done it this way”?

PLEDGE: I will pay attention to how I listen to others.

PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together 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.

