



GFASC on the Synodal Path 2022-2023



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Reflection 1

Following Clelia's Footsteps
Toward the Heart of Jesus

GFASC on the Synodal Path

AS GFASC families, we all are invited to journey together and with the Church in “Listening to God and to our Brothers and Sisters.”

Even the family can take on a synodal attitude

As a family we too can take on a synodal attitude, expanding the borders of our “small world” and opening ourselves up to the world around us. We can cultivate closer relationships with our neighbors, pledging ourselves to give our small contribution so that our house will not be, so to speak, merely a “hotel.” We can put a synodal stamp on our workplace as well, collaborating with our colleagues with passion, refusing any type of impropriety or compromise. The same holds for the school environment, our free time, and our health. Nothing of our personal, church, or social life is excluded from this synodal journey!

In convoking this Synod, Pope Francis is inviting the entire Church to reflect on a decisive theme for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” In the wake of the renewal of the Church proposed by Vatican Council II, this journey together is at the same time a gift and a responsibility. Reflecting together on the journey we have made up until now, the various members of the Church will be able to learn from one another’s experiences and perspectives, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“Synod” is an ancient and venerated word in the tradition of the Church. Its meaning draws from the most profound themes of

Revelation. It indicates a path that the People of God take together. At the same time, it refers to the Lord Jesus, who calls himself “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:16) and to the fact that Christians, His followers, were initially called “followers of the Way.”

The theme of the Synod is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.” The three dimensions of the theme are communion, participation, and mission. These three dimensions are profoundly interconnected. They are the vital pillars of a Synodal Church.

The objective of the current Synod is to listen, together with the whole People of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. We do this by listening together to the Word of God in Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church, and then by listening to one another, especially those on the margins, discerning the signs of the times. In effect, the entire synodal process aims to promote a lived experience of discernment, participation, and corresponsibility, where we have the possibility to gather together a diversity of gifts in view of the mission of the Church in the world.

The joys and hopes, sadness and anxieties of people of today, above all of the poor and all who suffer, are also the joys and hopes, the sadness and anxieties of the disciples of Christ. . . . The Christian community feels truly and intimately in solidarity with humankind and its story.

Within this framework, the family emerges strongly as the priority for the pastoral care of the Church.

“The Church is a family of families,” writes Pope Francis in *Amoris laetitia*. The synodal journey is an opportunity to experience this aspect powerfully: the way to approach a synod is as a family. By its nature, the family is characterized by honest and sincere discussion, by clarity and transparency in dialogue, and by “parresia” –straightforwardness in one’s speech. The

family is that environment where one can and must be able to be one's self, without fear of judgement or prejudice. Around the family table, all can present their dreams and desires, express their thoughts about the present and future, and mark out solutions to problems.

LISTENING TO GOD AND TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Luke 10:38-42 – Martha and Mary

As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

DIGGING DEEPER

This Gospel passage presents to us the image of a house where Jesus is a guest. The house is a living space where sometimes relationships are sacrificed in favor of what needs to be done or to one's fears and fantasies. Jesus chooses a small domestic issue to speak his Word and give meaning to a life lived generously. Two women: Martha, caught up in her routines, which are good in themselves but distract her from what is going on even in her own house and life; and Mary, who is disposed to listening. She is seated, almost in a position of submission, at the feet of Jesus in an attitude of obedience. God speaks a Word to us that He asks us to listen to and accept. To be freed from our traps, fears, and blind ambitions requires submission, sitting at the feet of the Master, abandoning ourselves with confidence to His Word.

- *In light of the Synod, how does the story of Martha and Mary speak to my life? What are my reflections on it? Where does it challenge me? How do I want to live my daily life?*
- *Do I feel part of the Church, part of a family? Do I feel that I live in communion with my brothers and sisters?*

SHARING - TESTIMONIES

WORDS OF MOTHER CLELIA



“Wherever you are, may there always be a private cell whose entrance is closed to mundane things. Let it be your place of rest, your sanctuary at home, which removes you from the annoyances of the world and unites you to God in silence and tranquillity” (*Spiritual Anthology 2.4, Mg.,II, p.15*)

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.

