



Synodality comes from the Spirit: Towards a Christian Life Faithful to the Spirit*

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ABSTRACT: This reflection paper aims to show how synodality comes from the action of the Holy Spirit in us. Christian life is driven by the Spirit to recover the meaning of following Jesus Christ. Allowing the Spirit to lead and transform us as a Church through his faithful and creative action will help us make synodality a reality, a vital ecclesial dimension already present in the first Christian communities, a fact that the epistles bear witness to.

It is the action of the Spirit that makes a Church go on the move with a prophetic attitude of acting from the inside out, from the bottom up, reading the signs of the times. The action of the Spirit makes us men and women of prayer, a praying church in search of God's will. It is the Spirit who makes us capable of listening from the bottom of our heart to the voice of diversity, plurality, even criticism and opposition. The Spirit enables us to reach out to others, letting ourselves be found, and being there to meet with others. These are all real dynamics of listening to others.

It is the Spirit who grants us the gift of discernment. The Spirit makes us capable of reading reality and discovering God's action in it. The action of the Spirit prepares us to have an attitude of service and dedication, to come out of ourselves and reach out to others, especially to the most vulnerable and unprotected. It moves us to liberation by making solidarity, justice, and peace real. We get to examine our behavior as believers by the action of the Spirit which makes us realize the characteristics and dimensions of our synodal experience as seen from a baptismal vocation perspective.

KEY WORDS: Synodality, Spirit, listening, encounter, prayer, discernment.

* Reflection paper.

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La sinodalidad viene del Espíritu: hacia una vida cristiana fiel al Espíritu

RESUMEN: el presente artículo de reflexión pretende dar a conocer como la sinodalidad proviene de la acción del Espíritu Santo en nosotros. La vida cristiana está llamada por el Espíritu a recuperar el sentido del seguimiento de Jesucristo. Dejarnos llevar y transformar por el Espíritu desde su acción fiel y creativa como Iglesia nos lleva a hacer realidad la sinodalidad, constitutivo vital eclesial ya presente en la vivencia de las comunidades primigenias de lo cual las epístolas dan testimonio.

Es la acción del Espíritu la que hace posible una iglesia en salida, en actitud profética de ir de dentro hacia fuera, de abajo hacia arriba, capaz de leer los signos de los tiempos. La acción del Espíritu en nosotros nos hace hombres y mujeres de oración, iglesia orante en búsqueda de la voluntad de Dios. Es el Espíritu el que nos hace capaces de escuchar con el corazón, el arte de saber escuchar incluso lo diverso y plural, la voz de la crítica y la oposición. Salir al encuentro, dejarnos encontrar, estar allí para el encuentro, todas ellas dinámicas reales de escucha al otro.

Es el Espíritu quien nos concede el don del discernimiento. El Espíritu nos hace capaces de saber leer la realidad descubriendo en ella la acción de Dios. La acción del Espíritu en nosotros nos hace estar en actitud de servicio y entrega. Se trata de salir de nosotros hacia los demás cuánto más a favor de los más vulnerables y desprotegidos. Se trata de liberar haciendo real la solidaridad, la justicia y la paz. Examinar nuestro modo de ser como creyentes, desde la acción del Espíritu, nos hace constatar desde nuestra vocación bautismal las características y dimensiones que nos hacen vivir la sinodalidad.

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PALABRAS CLAVE: Sinodalidad, Espíritu, escucha, encuentro, oración, discernimiento.

The path of our Christian life here and now has certainly led us to a point of uncertainty where we must find the answers to several questions that this change of era is posing. In addition, it has not been easy for many of us to stand firm while facing this pandemic; in some cases, we have even made decisions contrary to our way of life. This has all become part of a Church's life crisis that can neither be denied nor hidden. Guided by the Spirit, many Christians are looking for new horizons that will make it possible to renew and revitalize our consecration. We are making our way into the conception of a new Church while living prophetically the life to which we have been called and recovering the deep meaning of what following Jesus Christ means. Setting out on this path has meant letting ourselves be guided by love and transformed by the Spirit and allowing the action of the Spirit to be revealed in us. We are being invited by the Spirit to embrace again the Gospel as our only absolute guide. We must reply decisively and play a leading role in this new dawn, being ready to go wherever the Spirit leads us¹.

From the faithful and creative action of the Spirit, our pilgrimage as a Church has led us to make synodality a reality². It is neither an ecclesial fashion, nor a condition we must adapt to, nor a new form we must take³. It is a matter of recovering the ecclesial dimension experienced in the Christian communities of the early Church that epistles bear witness to.

Synodality is not a chapter in an ecclesiology textbook, much less a fad or a slogan to be bandied about in our meetings. Synodality is an expression of the Church's nature, her form, style, and mission. We can talk about the Church as being "synodal", without reducing that word to yet another description or definition of the Church. I say this not as a theological opinion or even my own thinking but based on what can be considered the first and most important "manual" of ecclesiology: the Acts of the Apostles⁴.

¹ So much yesterday as today, we believe that the whole Church is directed "from beginning to end by the Spirit of God." Barrett, 16.

² Cf. International Theological Commission: *Una aproximación suficiente a la sinodalidad*. Madrigal, Santiago (ed.); San José Prisco.

³ *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

Synodality is neither a passing fad, nor an empty slogan, nor an occurrence of the Pope. The Church is synodal by nature. As wisely expressed by St. John Chrysostom, Synod is the name of the Church; the two words are synonyms: Synod means Church. Therefore, the challenge, the adventure proposed to us is to concretize and develop "our" experience as a movement of the Spirit. - San Martín, Luis Marín (de). *Burgense*, 63/1 (2022) 9-26.

⁴ Pope Francis. Address to the faithful of the Diocese of Rome, September 18, 2021

Returning to this way of being a Church means recovering in us the action of the Spirit that invites us to set out on the path through our encounter with God and with our brothers and sisters, willing to listen and to talk, being able to discern what God is calling and sending us for today.

Therefore, these steps we are taking to make synodality come alive in us require, above all, our willingness to be led freely and responsibly by the action of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who makes this wish come true. We are called to be faithful in recovering and making real what Christianity has slowly hidden throughout time; we have distanced ourselves from our way of being and acting as a Church.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women on the move

Being on the move is an action of the Spirit. We tend to cling to inner states already achieved, to satisfactions already attained, to acquired places that we handle with ease, to behaviors that give us security. Our desire to stay in our nests and comfort zones makes us blind and deaf to the voice of the Spirit.

The Spirit's dynamic will always be to encourage us to come out, to set out on the path, to be on the move. It is the Spirit asking us questions, moving us, shaking us so that we do not fall and remain in the numbness and sleepiness that have led our vocational experience to mediocrity and stagnation in the monotony of daily life, in the passive acceptance of the allocation of uniform, meaningless schedules lived with rigor and severity.

It is the Spirit who enables us to face fears that prevent us from growing, from defeating what keep us stuck in previous wounds and nostalgia for the past, from overcoming struggles and fights over power, vainglory, and pride. Letting ourselves be led by the action of the Spirit makes it possible for us to leave behind our ego that subtly or blatantly has placed itself at the center of our life and turned into the referent of our existence.

It is the Spirit who stops us from being self-referential and leads us to focus our life on Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit transforming and changing us to be born again. Being on the move is the action of Spirit working in us despite the strong resistance often put up by many of us.

Long before setting out on the path to begin our pilgrimage, we resort to a whole set of reasons and justifications to prove the absurdity of embarking on the journey. When staring at the horizon and glimpsing the future, we only see calamities and setbacks, adversities, obstacles, and misfortunes. Even before leaving, we are already tired and weary just by probing the imaginary of what awaits us. It is the action of

the Spirit that makes us see all things new in Christ. Only the Spirit makes us realize that the impossible and improbable can happen.

This is what happens to us collectively. We get on the move from the inside out, from the bottom up⁵; we must bend down to rise. It is the movement of the Spirit that enables us to read the signs of the times, to act prophetically in favor of the change and newness of God's Kingdom.

The clearest presence of the Spirit has been in the prophetic pole of the Church and the society: in popular and revolutionary movements, in the reforms of the Church, in spiritual movements, in the various cycles of religious life, and in the new theological currents. Once again, we can see that the Spirit acts preferably from the bottom up, from the social and ecclesial bases, seeking the renewal of the Church and the society in harmony with the project of the Kingdom⁶.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women of prayer

The action of setting out on the path to meet God begins inside each one of us⁷. Whether at dawn or at dusk, during the day or at night, the time will always be appropriate according to our taste or disposition. Ultimately, it is the indwelling Spirit that leads us to pray.

As stated by Congar,

The Spirit guarantees the truly Christian nature of our prayer. He makes us go on with the prayer of Jesus. We are told, 'At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do (Lk 10:21). [...] For Paul, it is the Holy Spirit who makes us utter this invocation; it is the very Spirit who cries out in us (cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). The same Spirit by whom Jesus prayed arouses prayer in us. And it is the Spirit who makes us recognize Jesus as Lord (cf. 1 Cor 12:3)⁸.

⁵ *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

The Church is spiritual precisely because it is built from the bottom up. It differs from human societies which are born by the will of a power. The Church is not born from a power, but from the communion that unites individuals and communities. This communion is the result of perseverance and continuous human work. The force that allows this creation from the base is the Holy Spirit. - Comblin, 120.

⁶ Codina, *El Espíritu del Señor actúa desde abajo*, 109.

⁷ *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

⁸ Our deepest dimension is actualized in prayer, an amazing expression typical of man that qualifies him as a human being. Each of us can establish an I-You relationship not only horizontally with other humans but also vertically with Him, who is high above us and, at the same time, deep inside us. - Congar. *Sobre el Espíritu Santo. Espíritu del hombre, Espíritu de Dios* 73.

⁸ Congar. *Sobre el Espíritu Santo. Espíritu del hombre, Espíritu de Dios*, 74.

Being men and women of prayer makes us faithful to the action of the Spirit in us. Prayer, our encounter with our God, enables us to discover what happens to us, to grasp the meaning of reality and events, to find out what God wants and expects from each one of us.

Prayer makes us aware of God's passing through our lives. When we feel His presence in us, we are able to answer from our naked existence questions such as, how am I? or how do I feel here and now? There, in the silence and softness of the breeze, or in the noise and bustle of the storm, I will be able to discover my strengths and weaknesses.

Prayer makes us come out of ourselves to accomplish two purposes. In the first place, the encounter with God which makes us embrace our environment and find Him in all creatures. Secondly, the encounter with others to discover and embrace God in them despite the distance and differences between us, making others our own brothers and sisters.

Prayer joins us to others to share our faith. Living together is not enough; having a common life is not enough. Life communion requires praying together; this is the true meaning of the Church's prayer. The strength and dynamism of the Liturgy of the Hours are neither based on uniformity and metrics when reading the psalms, nor on harmoniousness when chanting them, but on the solidarity achieved when we reach out to the reality and particular situations of those most affected and vulnerable.

Prayer quiets us to listen to God's voice, to the voice of every living being, to the voice of every sign of the times and places. Prayer allows us to tune up our senses so that we can get fully integrated into the creative and salvific symphony of our God. Prayer leads us to the practice that we were taught and reminded by Jesus: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17); "Pray at all times, through the Spirit, every kind of prayer" (Eph. 6:18); "You must always pray without rest" (Lk. 18:1); and "Watch and pray at all times" (Lk. 21:36).

Being men and women of prayer will make us search and inquire constantly about what God wants from us at every moment in our individual and collective lives. Prayer makes us hear again God's call to elicit our response, a challenging and innovative gesture that passes through our heart with no other hope than finding in us a faithful servant's attitude.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women who listen

We must learn how to listen with our hearts, to feel what is happening in us, to read our body and understand how it communicates through our skin, senses, and organs.

We must be attentive to what our mind and thoughts want to express, to the voice of our psyche and will, to our dreams, fantasies, imagination, and reality. We must listen to our inner echo, our feelings of pleasure and satisfaction, but also feel our wounds, fractures, and blows.

We must listen with our hearts to the voice of our reality, our environment and surroundings, our atmosphere, and our situations. The context always has something to tell us; events speak of what is going on. Facts jump out at us to be read, analyzed, and interpreted. How can we do so if we do not listen to them? We must listen to the voice of our history in the fabric of the events we have woven out of the sublimity and the monstrosity of what we are, the goodness and the badness we are capable of, the joy and the sorrow we can cause.

Listening with our hearts to others –with their lights and shadows, their goodness and badness, from what they are and what they want to be– makes us bend down, take their place, put ourselves in their shoes. Listening to others without prejudice or intention to reply, just being there in eloquent silence means understanding without judging, trying to accept and recognize what they are and what they want to share with us.

We must listen to the voice of collectives, movements, and associations. That voice may represent a group of people, a corporation, a community; it combines, unites, and integrates many other voices. We must listen to the voice of our people, of indigenous people, of Afro-descendants, of LGBTQI people, of men and women whose dignity and rights have been violated. Many voices of children, poor and dumb people become eloquent and loquacious when we know how to listen to them.

The Spirit convenes in freedom. The Spirit does not use coercion, pressure, or seduction. Therefore, unity cannot equal uniformity, for the latter can only be the result of imposition. The Spirit unites diversity in full respect. Diversity is not against unity. The very gifts of the Spirit represent diversity. The unity of the Spirit is one of various entities that remain diverse. What is diverse –race, language, culture, sex, age, geography, history– is not outside unity. The Church unites not only what is similar among her members and communities but, precisely, what is different among them⁹.

We must listen to that which is different, diverse, and plural, to the voice of criticism and opposition. We should listen to what we do not want to hear, to what seems opposite and adverse, conflictive, and problematic, difficult, and combative. Listening to the voice of impediments and barriers by the action of the Spirit will

⁹ Comblin, 130.

enable us to discover and accept the truth¹⁰ to make much more comprehensive and inclusive decisions, taking steps towards the acceptance of opponents.

It is the Spirit who enables us to listen with our hearts. In the art of listening, there is no merit, purpose, technique, strategy, inventiveness, or method; all of these are useful and certainly help when it comes to knowing how to listen. But good listening arises from a heart capable of transcending and understanding that which is not evident, that which remains hidden in the smallness of our history. We must know how to listen so that we can learn other logics, other ways of establishing relations with people and with the planet we all live in.

Listening as openness to welcome: this starts from a desire for radical inclusion –no one is excluded– to be understood in a perspective of communion with sisters and brothers and with our common Father; listening appears here not as an instrumental action, but as the assumption of the basic attitude of a God who listens to his People, as the following of a Lord whom the Gospels constantly present to us in the act of listening to the people who come to him along the roads of the Holy Land; in this sense listening is already mission and proclamation¹¹.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women of encounter

The action of the Spirit makes us return to our vocation, to the initial encounter when we were called, to feel the joy of being invited to follow Jesus Christ, to be part of His common project, His project of love.

We are the expression of a love communion. Others have already given their lives for love. Today we are still invited to be a part of this project of devotion and dedication to God's Kingdom. We are astonished by the call but at the same time we feel an overflowing joy for being part of a shared dream: the project of His Kingdom.

If I recognize myself as part of this project, I must live with resolution this sense of communion and participation, a committed encounter with others, the strength of belonging and being a member of a body. Being attached to the body is the only way I can work for unity with the conviction that unity can solve any conflict. In

¹⁰ *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

The struggle for truthful versions of reality is a constant battle against deliberate attempts to confuse human beings. Telling the truth also means opposing lies; that is why worldwide cooperation between critical organizations and the media, that is, a new global network of lie detectors, is required in order to instill critical resistance, protect regional diversity, stabilize the self-confidence of nations and peoples and, above all, educate the minds and consciences of the next generation to distinguish truth from lies. - Müller-Fahrenholz, *God's Spirit: Transforming a World in Crisis*

¹¹ General Secretariat of the Synod's Working Document for the Continental Stage. "Enlarge the space of your tent" (Is. 54:2). October 2022

the encounter with others, we can weave communion and participation. Our ecclesial communities must work to make the participation of all members a reality; they should foster a participative encounter of all those who make up the community.

Participation becomes real in the encounter through the sense of belonging and the responsibility of those who are moved to listen by the Spirit. Spiritual conversation makes the encounter possible because it is by listening that we make room for others in our hearts, taking them seriously and considering what is important to them.

Reaching out to others, letting ourselves be found, being there for the encounter, these are all real dynamics of listening. We should ask ourselves constantly what kind of listening we are having in our communities since most of our disagreements are caused by our refusal to listen to others. Knowing how to listen means not imposing a way of thinking. If we manage to do this, we can turn our culture of confrontation into a culture of dialogue in which we are able to recognize each other's thoughts, words, and emotions.

Being with others, among others and for others is the action of the Spirit in us. Many of us may experience resistance and opposition to this action. Therefore, we need a personal conversion, a change in our hearts and minds. We must find that in us which hinders the encounter with ourselves and with others. We are insofar as we meet. Everything began in an encounter with Jesus when He said, "Come and follow me". If we are led by this call-and-follow dynamic, we will be able to enlarge our tent and find room for others in our lives, meeting with them to really walk together on the path of life, history, and salvation.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women of discernment

Walking together should be synonymous with listening to the various members of the Church and having the largest possible participation of the People of God¹². Therefore, the first steps in a journey together are good information and communication, a true listening attitude to weave together the conditions that foster an encounter concerning decisions in favor of the life of the Church.

¹² *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

The 'Church as the People of God' of the Second Vatican Council was more deeply understood in the period afterwards as "Church as communion", the initial foundation of the new codification of the Church and the source of the meaning of today's "synodal Church". This evolution does not imply a substantial change in the contents of the conciliar doctrine, but rather its natural unfolding. - San José Prisco, *Sinodalidad*, 23

Consensus on this vision of the Church allows us to focus our attention, serenely and objectively, on the important theological knots that still need to be untied. In the first place, there is the question concerning the relationship between participation in synodal life by all the baptized, in whom the Spirit of Christ arouses and nourishes the *sensus fidei* and the consequent competence and responsibility in the discernment of mission, and the authority proper to Pastors, which derives from a specific charisma that is conferred sacramentally; in the second place, there is the interpretation of communion between the local Churches and the universal Church expressed through communion between their Pastors and the Bishop of Rome, with the determination of how much pertains to the legitimate plurality of forms expressing faith in various cultures and what belongs to its perennial identity and its Catholic unity¹³.

We should find all means for the various actors of ecclesial activity to feel protagonists of the processes; they should be invited, consulted, and convened to participate autonomously and freely in the tasks that are considered highly significant for the community of the Church.

The necessary resources should be provided to find a time and a place for encounters of focus groups which are representative not only in the number of participants but also in the plurality of strata that make up the structure of the Church. The art of listening leads us to value words and silences, and to consider and appreciate all contributions.

We verbalize to clarify and clarify to discern. We start, then, from the knowledge of the reality that is being consulted on the basis of truthfulness, sincerity, and transparency. The knowledge of reality is of paramount importance. Therefore, we must know where God is speaking to us from here and now in our history. Without a life of faith, without an attitude of prayer, without a spiritual dimension, there is no discernment. How can we seek and find God's will if we do not pray?

If we do not pray, we cannot discern; if we do not discern, we will not be able to discover God's will for each of us, both personally and as a community. We must pray individually and in community. We must share our faith. Without setting aside a space and a time for prayer, following Jesus Christ will come to a halt and become meaningless.

Freedom in the process of participation of various people and strata is a key issue not only because autonomy must be respected in every Church community according to the gifts and charismas granted by the Spirit, but also because each community should embrace personal and collective plurality and diversity. Expressions,

¹³ International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*. Rome, 2018, 117.

manifestations, and communications made respectfully in search for the common good should be allowed.

It is the Spirit who grants us the gift of discernment. The Spirit enables us to read reality and discover in it the action of God by recognizing the *Kairos* dynamic that transforms everything to make it new. It is the *Ruach* movement acting in us to renew and transfigure reality, enabling us to respond with humility, courage¹⁴ and audacity to the future ahead.

In any case, the key issue is that we must go on the path “together” with the entire People of God. Without the real participation of everyone, our communion and mission –two essential features of the Church– would be at risk. Thus, the participation of all is an ecclesial commitment that cannot be waived since it is the essential mechanism for an authentic synodal praxis. In fact, the “subject of evangelization is much more than an organic and hierarchical institution; it is first and foremost a people on pilgrimage to God. Certainly, it is a mystery deeply rooted in the Trinity but historically realized in an evangelizing people on pilgrimage, always transcending institutional expression.” (EG 111)¹⁵.

The action of the Spirit makes us men and women walking with the poor and for the poor

Since we have been called to be witnesses of God’s love to the world, we must reveal his merciful love by using our charismas, gestures, and deeds to express our God’s mercy.

In our world consumed by despair and uncertainty, full of hearts that have been hurt, broken, and struck by violence, slavery, inequality, and inequity, the practice of our evangelical mission is imperative.

The action of the Spirit leads us to make of this time a beautiful opportunity for service and dedication. It enables us to understand the questions we are being asked today by our problems, our time, and our lives. We can reach out to others and show real signs of service. We can offer our lives to the service of the most vulnerable and needy.

Since Medellín and Puebla, the preferential option for the poor has been a central characteristic of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean. In

¹⁴ *Translator’s Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

In reference to the gifts received on Pentecost, “We can also say that if humility represents our love for God, courage and responsibility represent our love for the world and humanity: the second commandment, alike the first one, is the pair of wings that allow the human Spirit to take impulse (...) Now, there must be courage in humility and humility in courage; both are inseparable from the acceptance of responsibility. - Bulgákov, 382.

¹⁵ *Translator’s Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text.* San José Prisco. *Sinodalidad*, 69.

order to walk together in faith, the millions of poor men and women of the continent must be included in the communion of the People of God. In this regard, Aparecida tells us that “the same adherence to Jesus Christ is what makes us friends of the poor and in solidarity with their destiny” (Dap 257), an essential and indispensable characteristic of a truly synodal Church¹⁶.

Our world needs healing, curing, expelling demons in the way of ethical self-care and care for others. We are called to heal, to help, to support, to sustain, to liberate and to save. We are called to heal, help, support, sustain, liberate, and save each other. Solidarity brings about reconciliation and forgiveness and allows us to experience peace and justice.

The action of the Spirit makes us focus on the small and the helpless, on the poor and on those who lack the minimum to survive¹⁷. We cannot be deaf and blind to those who are out there on the existential and geographical peripheries. We must go to those places where only a Christian life on the move, a field hospital in solidarity with the poor can and must go.

The mission generates synodality when we listen to our people, when we walk patiently with others in communion and cooperation in a missionary encounter. We must walk with the poor and for the poor. It is there where pastoral work, the weaving of relational fabric, and the pilgrimage in integral ecology recreate our mission, demand our conversion, and activate a personal and community discernment to promote a new evangelization.

The participation of all turns the mission into giving and receiving, sharing prominence, working actively with reciprocal and permanent co-responsibility and subsidiarity, and promoting new ecclesial leaderships. Reaching out to others and taking care of them means considering others' way of being and acting. It is there, in the mission itself, where the sorority and fraternity we are all called to build become real, in the desire to reach social friendship.

¹⁶ CELAM (Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council), Document for Community Discernment, Mexico: 2021, 9.

¹⁷ *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text:*

The commitment to justice and the option for the poor are sources of spirituality. Solidarity nourishes spiritual life evangelically; the result is contemplation in liberation (L. Boff), in action for justice (I. Ellacuría), which is liberation with the Spirit (J. Sobrino).

It is an experience of the Spirit, the Spirit of life and love, who welcomes, saves, renews, calls, challenges, forgives, prophesies, gives strength, brings happiness, and recreates a new humanity. - Codina, *Creo en el Espíritu Santo*, 87.

Conclusion

In the path we have traveled, we have suggested the conditions required to understand the meaning of a synodal Church. We aimed to consider the fundamental elements that come from the Spirit in the dynamics, expression, and constitution of the pilgrim Church for the communion and participation of all her members, “the holy people of God”¹⁸ with their diversity and complementarity, their plurality and dynamism.

We are a missionary Church set to respond to the mission entrusted to us in this world. We aimed to highlight the basic elements of what we understand by synodality.

In this ecclesiological context, synodality is the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church, the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelizing mission¹⁹.

Thus, these constitutive elements of the ecclesial fabric that come from the Spirit are identified as the foundations of synodality.

The concept of synodality refers directly to the participation of all the People of God in the mission of the Church which is based on baptismal co-responsibility; each of us participates according to one’s own condition, that is, in the diversity and complementarity of our charismas²⁰.

Our approach points out that synodality comes from the Holy Spirit and is the way of living and acting in the Church. Synodality is the very form of the ecclesial journey, the *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Pilgrim Church. This explains our interest in the communicative and inter-relational dynamics of the evangelizing mission of the Church when approaching, elaborating, and making decisions.

Examining our way of being, as believers of the action of the Spirit, makes us go out of our prayerful being and become aware of our way of listening to, holding talks, and encountering with others in sincere discernment of our baptismal vocation; it makes us assess our charismas and ministries and put them at the service of our mission truly fulfilled in the poor and for the poor.

Encountering with others, listening to them, holding conversation, discerning, making decisions... while letting ourselves be surprised by the Spirit who always opens new paths... It is a matter of activating a personal and community discernment process to recognize, interpret and choose. Even more so at present, this task has been “a serious responsibility because some of our current realities, if

¹⁸ Cfr. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

¹⁹ International Theological Commission. Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church. 6

²⁰ *Translator’s Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text.* - San José Prisco, 51.

not well resolved, can trigger dehumanization processes that will be difficult to reverse later on. It is necessary to identify what may be a fruit of the Kingdom and what goes against God's plan". (EG. 52)²¹

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²¹ Ibid. 70. *Translator's Note: free translation of the quotation in the source text.*