

Reflections On The Philippine Catholic Church 2022

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

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Sept. 17, 2022

Pope Francis had directed the Catholic Church to conduct consultations with the different parishes about the real situation between the church and the community. In particular, The Bishops' National Report is the outcome/result which incorporated the responses of the different community sectors vis-à-vis the Catholic church. This endeavor is termed as synodality that the Church and the community should journey together to continue Christ's mission on earth. However, after the grassroots consultations, the Church realized the wide, unclear and confusing gap with the community.

A. Three (3) Processes of Synodality

1. The Reflection on the experience of the community; the story behind every unit of its community—OFW, prisoners, persons deprived of liberty, LGBTQ, politicians church workers, senior citizens, farmers, and call center agents, among others.
2. The Focus on the message of God which is giving through experiences.
3. The Response of the church to the experience of its community, e.g., raped & molested women in the red district, women who intend to abort, drug addicts, etc.

Previously, the usual respondents of the synodality were dioceses, parochial and church leaders. However, this time the respondents are sectoral representatives: laborers, carpenters, ranch workers, barangay leaders, family of suicidal victims, daily wage earners, vendors, laundry women, farmers, children with special needs, media people, priests of other Christian denominations, drug addicts (recovering from substance abuse), fisher folks, PWD, teachers, students, divorcees, etc.

B. Parts of the Process of Synodality

1. Asking - sentiments of the community, their concerns and experiences

2. Listening- attention and discernment according to God's will thru His message.

2.1 Disseminating through social media –spread of relevant issues in the community through Facebook, You Tube, Tiktok

2.2 Speaking out – allowing the community to speak out and to air their concerns.

Hence, synodality is an important undertaking the church has done since the community's experiences have been heard, discussed and analyzed.

Conclusion:

According to Cardinal Jose Advincula's report to the Vatican, the Philippine Catholic Church has neglected the marginalized sector of the community and has apparently detached itself from the poor. In the same way, the poor are also unfamiliar with the Church. Consequently, the Catholic Church has admittedly seen and observed the gap with the poor because the community feels that they are not part of the process of Church's synodality. Moreover, some sectors of the community have also inferred they are alone, abandoned and unheard during times of adversity. This feeling has resulted in doubt about the intention of the Church and has been further aggravated by scandals of some church leaders/priests. Consequently, some have decided to quit the Church. Thus, the Church has learned to listen to the concerns /issues of the community through the process of synodality to subsequently follow God's will.

Reflection:

1. Are you one of those left behind by the Church and wanted to quit because of feeling unheard and aggrieved?
2. After your bad experience with your congregation, have you tried to rediscover Jesus, to stay focus, and to anchor to Him?

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