

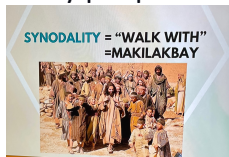
Reflections on the Catholic Church in the Philippines Part 2

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

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February 4, 2023

In reaction to the call of the Pope, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines explains that **Synodality** in the Church context will seek to accelerate evangelization by reaching out to all sectors of society. Synodality is "walking/traveling with God" and that means seeking especially the people who are in the existential peripheries - the least, the lost, and the last. The Church vows that no one will be left behind, especially the sectors that are not inside the Church: the "un-churched" or "not churchy people."



1. What is the situation in the Church today?

1.1. The activities and fundraising seem to have been focused on the physical renovations/beautification of the church structures. However, this is the moment that the Church is saying we need to go outside these walls, to listen to the people and be missionaries.

1.2. The young people are not going to church. They find the mass boring; there has been no Catechism in the past two years due to lack of budget; there is no slot in the public school system for religion.

2. **The Church is Alive.** Jose Cardinal Advincula in his homily at the Synodality Consultation stated that the Church is alive "Simbahang Buhay!". The Holy Spirit is moving within the church. Good things are happening in the Church: committed workers, lay people, and ministries, whose spirits and service are ablaze.

3. **The Challenge:** However, based on consultations with different sectors, there is a consensus that "the poor do not know the Church, and the Church does not know the poor." The poor say the Church is far from their lives. The words, the sacraments, and the actions are not in sync.

4. **The Proposed Solution/Process: LOOK. LISTEN & DISCERN. LOVE.** The Church will pursue evangelization through the following process:

4.1. **LOOK:** If we want to change, it has to start within. Whatever we do externally, what is within us will always show. We need to feel the love of God for us to see His grace. To develop our relationship with God, we can start walking with others toward a change.

4.2. **LISTEN & DISCERN:** We have to listen to marginalized groups: dysfunctional families, single/separated parents, PWDs, LGBTQ+, OFWs, prisoners, etc. We must be sensitive to the feelings of people.

4.3. **LOVE:** We need to be together in loving others. Let us commit to being Christ-like. He is there in the situation of those who have been excluded. How do we act in love?

4.3.1. Let us bring back small groups who read the Bible and share. The word of Christ becomes relevant among small groups. We commit to becoming a people of God that is participatory.

4.3.2. The Church should speak up and be involved with societal matters: nature, environment, and respect for life.

4.3.3. We commit to teaching the faith. We can leverage transparochial strengths – formation programs from childhood to adulthood.

4.4. Let us join hands with other faiths on common concerns via inter-religious dialogue. While we respect one another's religion and differences, let us talk about our common concerns.

Conclusion: Synodality encourages encounters and creates space for interaction. Synodality in the context of the Philippines means to seek the least, the lost, and the last!

Reflection:

1. Who will you bring to the Heritage? Are the poor included in the flock?
2. Does your praise and worship correspond with your actions?

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Tags: #Evangelization, #Synodality