

A Communion That Radiates

Guiding Question for the Reflection and Prayer:

How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?

Song [I Need You To Survive](#) - Hezekiah Walker [7:31min]; [short version](#) [2:52]

Opening Prayer



You are with us, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
As You guide us,
Make Yourself at home in our hearts.
Teach us the way to go and how to follow Your guidance.
We are attentive and ready. Help us to promote hope and peace.
Holy Wisdom, lead us in a love that influences our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
as we journey together in light.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time.
Glory to You, Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

[*Prayer for the Synod on Synodality - Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary \(bvmsisters.org\)*](#)

Opening

As we entered a new year of leadership and service of God's mission, we gather today to pray and reflect with the first of three priority issues for a synodal Church, that is communion, and explore how this may translate to our respective ministry and role. Triune God, send us your Spirit to companion us as we dare conversations leading to conversion, transformation, and communion.

Moving Beyond a Dualistic Understanding (Reader 1)

Saint John Paul II teaches us: "Communion and Mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion". (CL 32; IL 44)

Reflection

"One must avoid the risk of an individualistic approach and remember that God's word is given to us precisely to build communion, to unite us in the Truth along our path to God. While it is a word addressed to each of us personally, it is also a word which builds community, which builds the Church. Consequently, the sacred text must always be approached in the communion of the Church." (Verbum Domini, 86).

What is my experience of "communion giving rise to mission and mission being accomplished in communion?" What is the 'sacred text' in my life that helps me to build communion and impels me to mission (or visa versa)?

Walking Together (Reader 2)

In a synodal assembly, those who gather in the name of Christ listen to his Word, listen to each other, discern in docility to the Spirit, proclaim what they have heard and recognize it as light for the journey of the Church. (IL48)

Reflection

What should I say about sisterly charity, which should make us of one heart and one mind like the first holy Christian community? [Bl. Theresa, letter #949]

How might the components of a synodal assembly translate to a staff or board meeting?
How might these components and the image of the first holy Christian community influence or inform our understanding of our meetings?

Taking on the Incompleteness of Communion (Reader 3)

[I]n the name of the Gospel, which bonds need to be strengthened in order to overcome trenches and fences, and which shelters and protections need to be built, and to protect whom? Which divisions are unproductive? When does graduality make the path to complete communion possible? (IL 50)

Reflection

“May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:5-6).

May God look upon our good will, strengthen and protect the feeble structures erected by human hands. [Mother Caroline]

In your experience, what does it take to preserve and promote communion?

Prayers of the Community

Contemplative Pause - In light of our reflections, what do we want to bring to prayer?

Closing

God our Beloved, we thank you for this time of shared reflection and prayer. As we journey this synodal path together, strengthen our sense of communion as sponsored ministries of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and with the entire Church. May our communion radiate love and concern for people in poverty, render service in areas of urgent need, and advocate on behalf of our fragile earth, our common home. Amen.



Abbreviations:

CL - ST. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1988)

IL - *Instrumentum Laboris*

Verbum Domini - Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated persons and the lay faithful on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church