



21 November 2021
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE
FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, MISSION.

HYMN: 221 or any other. (Joyful Celebration)

INTRODUCTION:

Pope Francis reminds us that the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe is placed at the end of the Liturgical year to recall that the life of creation doesn't advance by chance but proceeds to a final end: the definitive manifestation of Christ, Lord of history and of the whole of creation. The power that Christ the King exercises is the power of love. Kingdoms founded on the power of arms sooner or later collapse; but the Kingdom of God is founded on love and it reigns over hearts. It confers on those who receive it, peace, justice, freedom, and fullness of life.

The Gospels frequently show us Jesus "on a journey"; he walks alongside people and listens to the questions and concerns lurking in their hearts. He shows us that God is not found in neat and orderly places, distant from reality, but walks ever at our side. He meets us where we are, on the often rocky roads of life. Today, ask ourselves – all of us, Pope, bishops, priests, religious and laity – whether we, the Christian community, embody this "style" of God, who travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity. Are we prepared for the adventure of this journey? Or are we fearful of the unknown, preferring to take refuge in the usual excuses: "It's useless" or "We've always done it this way"?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 10:17-27

REFLECTION:

Celebrating a Synod means walking on the same road; walking together. Let us look at Jesus. First, he encounters the rich man on the road; he then listens to his questions, and finally he helps him discern what he must do to inherit eternal life. Encounter, listen and discern. Pope Francis reflects on these three verbs that characterize the Synod.

Encounter:

The Gospel passage begins by speaking of an encounter. A man comes up to Jesus and kneels down before him, asking him a crucial question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" So important a question requires attention, time, willingness to encounter

others and sensitivity to what troubles them. The Lord is not stand aloof; he does not appear annoyed or disturbed. Instead, he is completely present to this person. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each individual's history. That is the closeness that Jesus embodies. He knows that someone's life can be changed by a single encounter.

PRAYER: (all together)

God of closeness, compassion and tenderness, Jesus the serving King who meets us, right where we are; may the Synodal journey helps us break all forms of barriers and become a Church of communion by her very presence, bandaging wounds and healing broken hearts with the balm of love and understanding. Grant us openness, courage and a willingness to let ourselves be challenged by the presence and the stories of others we encounter.

Listen:

True encounter arises only from listening. Jesus listened to that man's question and to the religious and existential concerns that lay behind it. He did not give a non-committal reply or offer a pre-packaged solution; he did not pretend to respond politely, simply as a way of dismissing him and continuing on his way. Jesus simply listens, for whatever amount of time it takes; he is not rushed. Most importantly, he is not afraid to listen to him with his heart and not just with his ears. Indeed, he does more than simply answer the rich man's question; he lets him tell his story, to speak freely about himself. Christ reminds him of the commandments, and the man starts to talk about his youth, to share his religious journey and his efforts to seek God. This happens whenever we listen with the heart: people feel that they are being heard, not judged; they feel free to recount their own experiences and their spiritual journey.

PRAYER: (all together)

Jesus our Lord and King, nothing leaves you indifferent and unconcerned. Listening with the heart is always costing; for it hears through silences and gestures beyond the spoken words and moves us to action. Teach us to listen with our hearts to the indwelling voice of your Holy Spirit, and to one another so as to discern our times, in solidarity with the struggles and aspirations of all humanity.

Discern:

Encounter and listening are not ends in themselves, leaving everything just as it was before. On the contrary, whenever we enter into dialogue, we allow ourselves to be challenged, to advance on a journey. And in the end, we are no longer the same; we are changed. We see this in today's Gospel. Jesus senses that the person before him is a good and religious man, obedient to the commandments, but he wants to lead him beyond the mere observance of precepts. Through dialogue, he helps him to discern. Jesus encourages that man to look within, in the light of the love that the Lord himself had shown by his gaze (cf. v. 21), and to discern in that light what his heart truly treasures. And in this way to discover that he cannot attain happiness by filling his life with more religious observances, but by emptying himself, selling whatever takes up space in his heart, in order to make room for God.

PRAYER: (all together)

All knowing God, it is only in the light of your compassionate and non judging gaze of love, that we see the truth of our own reality and the realities around us. In a world that seeks instant solution and temporary quick fix for every problem, may we discern what is of eternal value pertaining to our life and mission as Christians.

HYMN: 220 or any other. (Joyful Celebration)

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

Leader:

God our Heavenly Father sent His only Son as King into the world. On the Solemnity of Christ the King, we echo His authority over the Universe. A king who became an ordinary man, to reign in the hearts of Humankind with the all-embracing mandate of love, peace and service. Trusting in God's love and mercy, let us place before Him our petitions confident of His benevolence.

Let our response be: – Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For our Holy Father, Bishops, Clergy, Religious and those in leadership roles in the Church that they may promulgate the initiative of Synodality among the people of God and vivify the journey of actively walking together in the Church's evangelizing mission. We pray to the Lord. R/-
2. For those in governance, that they may be endowed with wisdom to respect and protect the people's rights and diligently work towards promoting common good. We pray to the Lord. R/-
3. For our Youth that listening to the promptings of the Spirit they may discern Synodality as the call of the hour and the 'pilgrim' character of the Church where, they play a vital role in leading the flock of Christ in building His Kingdom. We pray to the Lord. R/-
4. We pray to the Lord, as a community of faithful that like Christ our King, we may encounter people as the image and likeness of God and imbibe the virtue of listening so as to live in the Spirit of Christ Himself. We pray to the Lord. R /-
5. For every baptised person that born into Christ our King as disciples, we may realize our call to be a protagonist in the mission of the Church, enlivening her charism through the ministries and working toward renewal in the Church. We pray to the Lord. R/-

CONCLUSION:

God's word is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). That word summons us to discernment and it brings light to that process. It guides the Synod, preventing it from becoming a Church convention, a study group or a

political gathering, a parliament, but rather a grace-filled event, a process of healing guided by the Spirit. In these days, Jesus calls us, as he did the rich man in the Gospel, to empty ourselves, to free ourselves from all that is worldly, including our inward-looking and outworn pastoral models; and to ask ourselves what it is that God wants to say to us in this time. And the direction in which he wants to lead us.

Dear brothers and sisters heeding the call of Pope Francis and the Universal Church let us have a good journey together! May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel, loyal to Christ our King and be open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. Let us not miss out on the grace-filled opportunities born of encounter, listening and discernment. In the joyful conviction that, even as we seek the Lord, he always comes with his love to meet us first.

CLOSING HYMN: 339 or any other. (Joyful Celebration)