

Co-Responsibility in a Synodal Church



The Passionists of Holy Cross Province
Pre-Chapter Meeting
January 11, 2022
Dr. Robert Choiniere, D.Min.

What is the root of ministry?

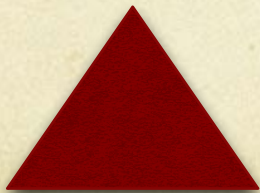
Pre-Vatican II

Clergy

Holy Orders



Laity



Post- Vatican II

People of God



"I hold you in my heart, you who are all **partners** with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in defense and confirmation of the gospel"

Philippians 1:7

All are agents of evangelization in service to the Gospel
and the People of God.

Development of Partnership

- Pre-Vatican II – Hierarchical separation of responsibility
- Vatican II – Ad intra/Ad extra distinction of collaboration
- 1983 Code of Canon Law – Codify People of God

Can. 204 §1. The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through **baptism**, have been constituted as the People of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal function, they are **called to exercise the mission** which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with **the condition proper to each**.

- Benedict XVI – Co-Responsibility

“The co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God must be gradually promoted. The laity must no longer be viewed as **collaborators** of the clergy but as **co-responsible** for the Church's being and action”



Synod Synthesis from Worldwide Religious Congregations

- **“The shared conviction is that the foundation of synodality is baptism, not ordination.** All the baptised are called to walk the synodal path together, each offering his or her specific contribution.”
- **A focus on what we have in common as baptized before any differences:** according to Lumen Gentium, there is a radical equality between all the baptised (LG §10-13; 40-41), we are all co-responsible, we are all invested with the same dignity within the priestly, royal, and prophetic people. This co-responsibility becomes viable in the synodal journey.

Synthesis of the UISG-USG from the Diocesan Phase of the Synodal Process (2022)

From a top-down Church to a listening/learning Church

Synodality radically reconceives the method of discerning the will of God. From a top down exercise to a communal discernment where all, especially the marginalized, are included.

We learn and discern together what the Holy Spirit desires for the Church

Proximity, Closeness, Curiosity, Compassion, Courage, Encounter, Conversion:
“We must make a different Church” – Pope Francis, Opening of Synod 10/9/21





Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Pope Francis on Discernment



“How could we speak about the family without engaging families, listening to their joys and their hopes, their sorrows and their anguish?”

– Pope Francis, Synod on the Family, 2018

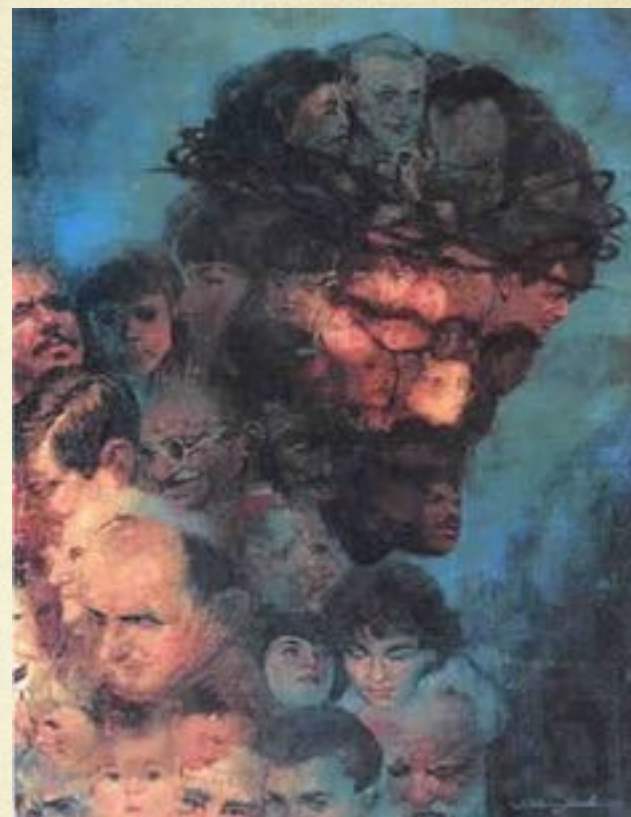
Common Passion and Vision for Mission

- “The Pastors, established by God as “authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church,” should not be afraid to listen to the Flock entrusted to them. The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of **democracy** based on the principle of majority, because there is, at the basis of participation in every synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests.” PD §14
- A new culture of ecclesial consensus on the basis of a **consensus omnium fidelium**, because “in a synodal style, decisions are made by discernment, on the basis of a *consensus* born of common obedience to the Spirit.” PD §30

- “11. We dream of a Church of collaborative and communal discernment: where the most important issues are resolved in consultation with the greatest number of people involved and where those who are different and those who both denounce and proclaim are listened to.

- “12. The Church of a new paradigm is not pyramidal but circular and horizontal: participatory, witnessing, compassionate, inclusive, unified, transforming Church; listening Church, Church of the people.”

Synthesis of the UISG-USG from the Diocesan Phase of the Synodal Process (2022)



- **“Consecrated life – on all continents – expresses the desire for greater collaboration and partnership with all lay people**, to include them in more roles within their charismatic Institutes and families. The aim is greater mutual appreciation and the possibility of enriching and learning from each other. This is something we still need to investigate and concretize. There are deeper and fuller ways of collaborating that we have not yet imagined, and we must work together to achieve this.



Balcony View: A Key to Co-Responsible Leadership



- “Consecrated life [...] matures when the young and elderly walk together, when the young rediscover their roots and the elderly welcome those fruits. When we walk alone, however, when we remain fixated on the past or jump ahead in trying to survive, then the consecrated life stagnates.” Pope Francis, *Homily at Mass for the World Day of Consecrated Life* (Feb. 2, 2019)



The need to value Co-Responsibility between men and women based on equality and reciprocity

- “The Synod recommends that everyone be made more aware of **the urgency of an inevitable change**, not least on the basis of anthropological and theological reflection on **the reciprocity between men and women.**” *PD* §55



Co-Responsibility, Synodality and the Passionist Family

How are you as a member of the Passionist Family being challenged or inspired by the vision of co-responsible leadership? How might we deepen and further develop our sense and practice of partnership?

