

## HOMILIES FROM ARCHBISHOP JACKELS ABOUT THE SYNOD

23 JANUARY 2022 | THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

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When it was announced I was to be the bishop of Wichita, someone told me: Jackels, you had better lose your sense of humor, or no one is going to be afraid of you as their bishop.

I responded: Why would I want anyone to be afraid of me? Besides, I didn't change who I am in order to be chosen as a bishop, so I'm certainly not gonna change when I am one.

As a matter of fact, there is precedence for how humor (maybe not as weird as mine) and joy can bolster efforts to restore the real nature of the true Church.

Some Catholics claim that same aim is reached only by denying sin-sick souls the medicine of the Eucharist, or by slamming the door of the Church on wayward sheep.

Or, they say, by putting our focus on rules, doing rituals, and the rod of punishment if we don't obey. But anger, gloom, and doom are a major turn-off; who'd wanna be part of that?

Compare that focus and program to how St. Philip Neri converted the city of Rome, where he found little practice of faith, and much practice of sin, among laity and clergy alike.

Or compare it to what St. Francis de Sales did as bishop of the Calvinist stronghold of Geneva, Switzerland, where Catholics were treated with hostility.

Philip Neri was famous for using humor to attract people; no one was afraid of him. And he is quoted as saying: First be kind, and the rest will follow.

And Francis de Sales was the one who coined the phrase: A spoonful of honey attracts more flies than a barrelful of vinegar.

Both Francis and Philip won tens of thousands of souls back to the Catholic Church and to practice faith as a way of life; not by anger, but by kindness, joy and love for the poor.

Our Archdiocese isn't unholy Rome or Calvinist Geneva, but we still need to restore the real nature of the true Church, maybe we'll use humor, honey, and kindness, but we'll also use...

The Synod on synodality for parish planning, not shoring up churches as monuments to the past, but using our limited means to supply leadership and resources for vital parishes...

Which are places, as the Readings exhort us, where people are known for sharing with the poor, rejoicing, and being kind to people, especially sin-sick souls and wayward sheep.