



February 20, 2022

Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

*Just as we have born the image of the earthly one (Adam),
We shall also bear the image of the heavenly one (Jesus).*
—1 Corinthians 15:49



Dear Friends;

St Paul tells us that we are being shaped by God into a new kind of human. Adam represents natural humanity. In Christ we are transformed into something new. The Church is on the evolutionary edge of this profound change. No longer can we be ruled by our egos and passions. We must be ruled by self-giving love. In the Gospel from Luke, Jesus tells us what a transformed humanity looks like. We love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, forgive those who wrong us, and give generously to all in need without judgment. No one alone can do this. Jesus forms a community of his disciples. We need community in order to live out our new life of grace.

The Church must actively live the call to be a new humanity. We, the Risen Body of Christ, hear the Spirit call us to bring forgiveness, healing and love to everyone. This call is ancient and yet is ever new to each generation as we seek to live it in our own era. In our time we begin with the path of Synodality—that is walking the journey together.

Francis writes, “*Synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit.*” In 2023 Pope Francis will meet with the Synod of Bishops and significant lay participation. The objectives of this Synod meeting are:

- Recall how the Spirit has guided the Church through time and how today calls us to be together, witnesses of God’s love;
- Living a participative and inclusive Church that offers everyone—especially for those who find themselves on the margins—the opportunity to express themselves and to be heard in order to contribute to the building up of the people of God.
- Recognize and appreciate the many gifts that the Spirit generously bestows on us for the good of the community and the entire human family;
- Explore the ways we are responsible for and participate in proclaiming the Gospel, to build a more beautiful and habitable world for all.

The Synod journey unfolds within the dynamics of our own times. There are epoch changes happening in society, the Church and our planet. We cannot hide in a pious virtual world. As the Second Vatican Council taught we are called to “*scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.*” (Gaudium et Spes, 4) The challenges we face are:

- The global tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Inequalities and injustices: consumerism, fragmentation of institutions, the conditions faced by migrants, divisions within the human family
- The cry of the poor and the cry of our ravaged earth.

There are three indispensable keys to a Synodal Church—Communion, Participation and Mission.

- **Communion:** we are called to be a unity-in-diversity. The aim is not to make us all the same but learn to walk together sharing a common path and embracing our differences. It is God who unites us in the body of Christ.
- **Participation:** we are called to be active members not merely spectators. We must see to it that no one is left out. We make an effort to be inclusive of all.
- **Mission:** each of us has gifts and a vital role to play in advancing the Kingdom. No one is excluded from the joy of the Gospel. As disciples we are leaven in the midst of humanity so the Kingdom may rise across the whole world.

So let us bring open ears and hearts as we listen to the Spirit moving within our community. May our voices lend guidance to our collective mission in the world. Join us for a listening session on March 10, @7:00pm. And after our listening sessions we will send our response to the diocese and they will pass it on with that of all the other parishes to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

Peace,

Fr Ron

Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: www.anne.church