

Archdiocese of Birmingham

Friday 24 June 2022

Multi Academy and School Leadership Conference

Synodality as a Way of Communicating and Relating

Lord Jesus Christ, you the centre at which all things meet and which stretches out over all things so as to draw them back into itself: I love you for the extension of your body and soul to the farthest corners of creation through grace, through life, and through matter... I love you as a world, as this world that has captivated my heart ...

[Extract from 'Prayer of the Universe' Teilhard de Chardin]

JOURNEYING TOGETHER -aspects that show forth the form of synodality

The Spirit is always at work to show forth God's love.

Everyone's voice matters.

Valuing the gifts and talents that God pours out on us to use for our good

Acting for the good of the world/creation

Uncovering where power and responsibility get distorted

Having involvement in social justice

Cultivating relationships with all people

Living synodality

Message for World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis 22 Jan 2016

"Communicating means sharing, and sharing demands listening and acceptance. Listening is much more than simply hearing. Hearing is about receiving information, while listening is about communication, and calls for closeness. Listening allows us to get things right, and not simply to be passive onlookers, users or consumers. Listening also means being able to share questions and doubts, to journey side by side, to banish all claims to absolute power and to put our abilities and gifts at the service of the common good."

Homily of Pope Francis on the opening of the Synodal Path

Are we good at listening? How good is the "hearing" of our heart? Do we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even though they have had difficulties in life, and to be part of the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged?

Participating in a Synod means placing ourselves on the same path as the Word made flesh. It means following in his footsteps, listening to his word along with the words of others. It means discovering with amazement that the Holy Spirit always surprises us, to suggest fresh paths and new ways of speaking. It is a slow and perhaps tiring

exercise, this learning to listen to one another – bishops, priests, religious and laity, all the baptized – and to avoid artificial and shallow and pre-packaged responses. The Spirit asks us to listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every Church, people and nation. And to listen to the world, to the challenges and changes that it sets before us. Let us not soundproof our hearts; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties. So often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another. Finally, 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.

God-facing - Movement outwards towards others, creation and God

- inflamed with the love of God
- being encouraged and strengthened
- interior joy, freedom
- desire to serve God
- connect with God in all things - unity
- inspirations and quiet
- growing in hope, faith and love

Facing away from God - Turning in on myself, putting 'me' as the focus, the centre of everything

- darkness and emptiness
- destructive
- disquiet or restlessness, inner turmoil
- discouragement and sadness in which one feels without hope or love
- feeling adrift or 'the world revolves around me'
- seeing endless problems, or half-truths or 'but what if's
- one finds oneself lazy, lukewarm, as though cut off from God

Where might I attend to the working of the Spirit in discerning together as a group?

What brings hope in what's being said?

What has a sense of love?

What gives encouragement?

A sense of challenge or being stretched but that feels doable with God?

Is there something new being created out of holding the tensions in gentle conversation?

What is being freed up?

Is truth, even though not easy, able to be spoken and held?

A sense of belonging and togetherness?

Etc.