



Synod means

# “our ecclesiastical meeting”



I remember the previous three Synods of our Archdiocese, which were carried out by the Archbishop and some clergy.

They produced regulations for the local Church to compliment the rules of the universal Church - the Code of Canon Law.

We live a well-ordered, peaceful life when we have good laws which we accept and live by. These laws flow from our Catholic Faith. The faith itself is not debated or challenged but reviewed as the basis for our self-examination on “How are we carrying on our Mission?” and planning improvements for the future.

This year, following Vatican II's instructions, the laity are to be involved. Some 225 men and women elected or appointed to listen to the Holy Spirit and plan for the future.

For the 360,000 living in our Archdiocese who call themselves Catholic, there has to be a process of self-examination, including the Angus Reid Poll, to identify what we do or what we have not done. The study has been summarized in a classic presentation by our Archbishop, “The Signs of the Times”. (If anyone reading this has not seen it you should phone 604-683-0281, Synod Office, for a copy.)

The Church has always had a fierce struggle coping with the “spirit of the world” - the philosophy of life prevalent at the time and place, pagan gods, no god only human laws, self-serving here and now.

Life has often been called a mystery. Hopefully, parents will guide their children to develop gradually the Judeo-Christian purpose of life - to know, serve and love God here on earth and to enjoy Him forever in heaven.

In our present world, the changes in public morality have reached levels similar to those of the pagan Roman Empire in its decadence.

The gift of life, a miracle of God, has been reduced to an accident of chance. We see the sacredness of life - its purpose - its freedom of choice to serve God and neighbour.

We admit it is a mystery with problems to be solved - relations with God and each other in sickness and health - terminated here by a death we cannot foretell or prevent.

In making the decisions of life as we struggle on our pilgrimage, we have the grace of God available and the sound advice of our Faith, the counsel of our family, but we always have the temptations of independence, of pride, of self-will. Our failures are often self-induced - we fail to listen to parents, to the Holy Spirit. We can see this process in others but not in ourselves until we are jolted out of our self-assurance. We assume we are good enough. We did not listen.

Now the Church of Vancouver, with its 360,000 is asking each one of us to listen.

We listen well when we re-read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, because they tell us the history of early Christianity, and mix in our own experiences of life today and our need to embrace the life, teachings and power of our Saviour.

Why have we allowed ourselves to be indifferent to becoming holy? We can always do better. Accept the Holy Father's invitation to put on the face of Christ, because our behaviour can be an effective influence to conversion. No one can do this for us. Reading and discussing our faith life will help us grow in our own wisdom and virtue.

Position presentation on prayer, worship, teaching, community and evangelization are being prepared for our study.

Let us look forward to offer to participate in prayer, study and share in the Synod.

Lent has begun, and is always a good time to change for the better. We all want the Church to shine as the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are, with our Saviour, the Church. Let's go, make the effort to make the Fourth Synod a success.

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總括：-

1. 正如在開始時說過，隨著歷史的進展，每個事物都在變化中，所以為針對當代的需要，神學思想的進步，原來節日的意義和禮儀，便漸漸予以淨化提升，而加入新的如文化或宗教方面的因素，古代是如此，現在仍是一樣。

2. 慶節的主要目的，不只在純紀念性的外在儀式，而是透過儀式，使人生活所追念的史實，給人一種新的體驗，從而加強人與天主的關係，鞏固信仰，更進一步，使人寄望未來，就如舊約時代的以民，渴望著默西亞的來臨，(默西亞確已來臨，可惜他們不接受)我們這時代的人，期待著末世光榮的來臨！

【參考書籍：聖經辭典（思高）、聖經中的制度和習俗（韓承良 思高）、我們的慶節（趙一舟 見證）】