### **PARTICIPATION**

Archdiocese of Adelaide Festival Function Centre September 12, 2023



# The Fundamental Meaning of Communion FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Communion refers firstly not to the church's structure but to the meaning at the heart of the church:

- a) The eternal Father has created us in love to share divine life (participation, fellowship, community) (LG, no. 2)
- b) The communion, which is the whole purpose of God's presence with us, is realized in a unique way in the person of Jesus Christ and his historical life. (LG, no. 2) In him, God became human so that we might share God's life.
- c) The Holy Spirit is poured out onto the world and the church, so that what happened in Jesus Christ can be continued in us. (LG, no. 48)

## The Fundamental Meaning of Communion FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

#### In summary:

- The mystery of the church means that in the Spirit we have access through Christ to the Father...
- ...so that we can share (or be in communion with) God's life.

#### This means:

 ...that it is not the church which is the answer to the human longing for community. That longing is in fact a striving for something which finds its fulfilment only in God's friendship and love.

### Communion of the Faithful

### PARTICIPATION & CO-RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL

The meaning of communio affects the whole life of the church—the common existence of the people of God is its heart.

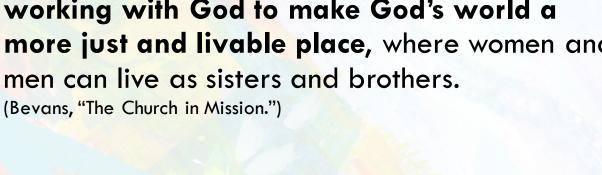
Perhaps the engagement of lay people in the life of the church is **the most valuable development in church life** since the '60s. (W. Kasper)

## MISSION IN GAUDIUM ET SPES

Gaudium et Spes has the key to a renewed understanding of mission:

Mission means to proclaim the truth of Christ in all times and places, and to acknowledge that grace is at work in the world.

Gaudium et Spes makes clear that mission is working with God to make God's world a more just and livable place, where women and men can live as sisters and brothers.





## **PARTICIPATION**

...cultivating an "ecclesial praxis" that expresses the concreteness of communion & mission at every step of our journey and activity

- Is concerned for each person's flourishing
- Values the uniqueness of each person
- Guards against an abstract, instrumental organizational culture

(IL §56)



PARTICIPATION FOUR KEY QUESTIONS

Is **authority** understood & used as a form of power derived from worldly models ... or is it rooted in service?

How to "imbue our structures & institutions with the dynamism of the missionary, synodal church?"

The whole People of God (incl. bishops, priests, & deacons) need **formation** for a synodal culture & spirituality.

Need to renew the language used in the church. (IL §§57–60)

# IMPLICATIONS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS & DPCs

The Continental Assemblies proposed that a synodal way of proceeding should penetrate the life of the church at every level, incl. PPCs and DPCs.

- Requires adequate institutional frameworks to facilitate the co-responsibility that comes from baptism.
- Transparent, mission-focused procedures open to participation...that make room for women, young people, minorities, the poor & marginalised.
- The method of spiritual conversation has proved particularly valuable.

(IL B.3.3)

## FOR DISCUSSION

How can Paris Pastoral Councils foster a more participative church life, both in the PPC itself, and in the wider parish?

- That is: how can the PPC foster the communion of the church and proclaim the truth of the gospel in the local context.
- What would be required to foster that transformation?



### THANK YOU!

#### References:

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris for the First Session* (October 2023).

Serena Noceti, Reforming the Church: A Synodal Way of Proceeding (Paulist 2023).

Walter Kasper, "The Church as Communion: Reflections on the Guiding Theological Idea of the Second Vatican Council," *Theology and Church* (London: SCM Press, 1989), 148–65.

#### **Artwork:**

Lisa Bierer

#### Photos:

Adelaide Diocesan Assembly, October 2022



For a synodal Church
communion I participation I mission