



Archdiocese of Glasgow

8th August 2023.

Reflection on the Instrumentum Laboris Section A #17-42.

These reflections are synthesized from a number of responses from our Synodal Group, from those who responded to an appeal in Flourish the Diocesan Newspaper and those who responded via the Diocesan Synodal Website. On the whole they were very pleased with the direction the church is taking in the synodal process. Concerns were raised as to the inclusivity of all the people of God in the process and some had reservations about the integrity of the process. On the whole the response was very positive and warmly welcomed. A maturing of the churches self understanding.

For a synodal church .

17-18. The synodal process allowed us to speak of difficult areas of church life, teaching and moral uncertainty. It did not brush problems under the carpet. It is refreshing to experience such honesty in our church.

Listening and discerning is a gift and a challenge, many are not ready for it. It was noted that for some, listening in front of the parish priest maybe possible but speaking may not be as welcome!

Characteristics of a synodal church.

19-31. Baptism is the source of our co-responsibility for our church. The people of God wish a synodal attitude to permeate our church at all levels. Being listened to is necessary for our human dignity, to encourage us to experience a church that loves us deeply because God loves us deeply. (It was pointed out that many Catholics have walked away as they do not experience the church as loving as God loves.) A listening church knows it has to learn, to ask forgiveness for not listening, for the lack of trust and credibility we have brought upon ourselves. Listening is the way forward. Other communities can help us to learn from

their synodality. (Good Friday Agreement & South Africa's emergence from Apartheid.) Differences need not separate us, diversity should never be forced into uniformity. We can trust that the path of finding unity in diversity will become clearer as we walk this very path. The radical nature of a welcoming and inclusive church is very attractive. There is joy at this "mood change" in the church. But we must not be afraid to "speak the truth in love" and call everyone to walk the road of repentance and perfection. We must walk together beyond our differences. As we welcome this synodal method, we know it has not engaged the whole people of God, we must guard against a small elite walking to far ahead of others. This could be another form of clericalism. The youngest voice, the marginalised voice, the uncomfortable but prophetic voice must also be heard.

Conversation in the Spirit.

32-42. Discernment must begin by conversation in the Spirit. This was refreshing, welcome, prayerful and creative. A questioning church is a church alive. A new experience opening us to each other and to the Spirit who gives us the confidence to move outwardly in mission. Prayerfulness and understanding of the churches tradition and magisterium are needed here to prevent a cacophony of voices and opinions. (Many have alluded to the need for adult formation and education not just in the synodal way but in adult faith- we need to understand the faith we are being called to proclaim.) From prayer and understanding symphony needs to occur. This is the biggest challenge of the synodal way, convincing sceptics that it is not going to be a parliament where the loudest voices win.