



CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP

A work of the Missionaries of God's Love

Towards a Theology of Ministerial Leadership

MLTP 3

Inspire us to give
generously of
ourselves, so that
people may be drawn
into the mystery of
love, and experience
the fullness of life.



What's going on?

Ministerial Leadership for the Mission - Priests

- Some priests enthusiastic about mission, but don't know what to do
- Other priests happy for parishioners to do whatever, but don't want to get involved themselves
- Other priests trying to do everything, won't let parishioners do anything
- Enthusiasm and suspicion about synodality



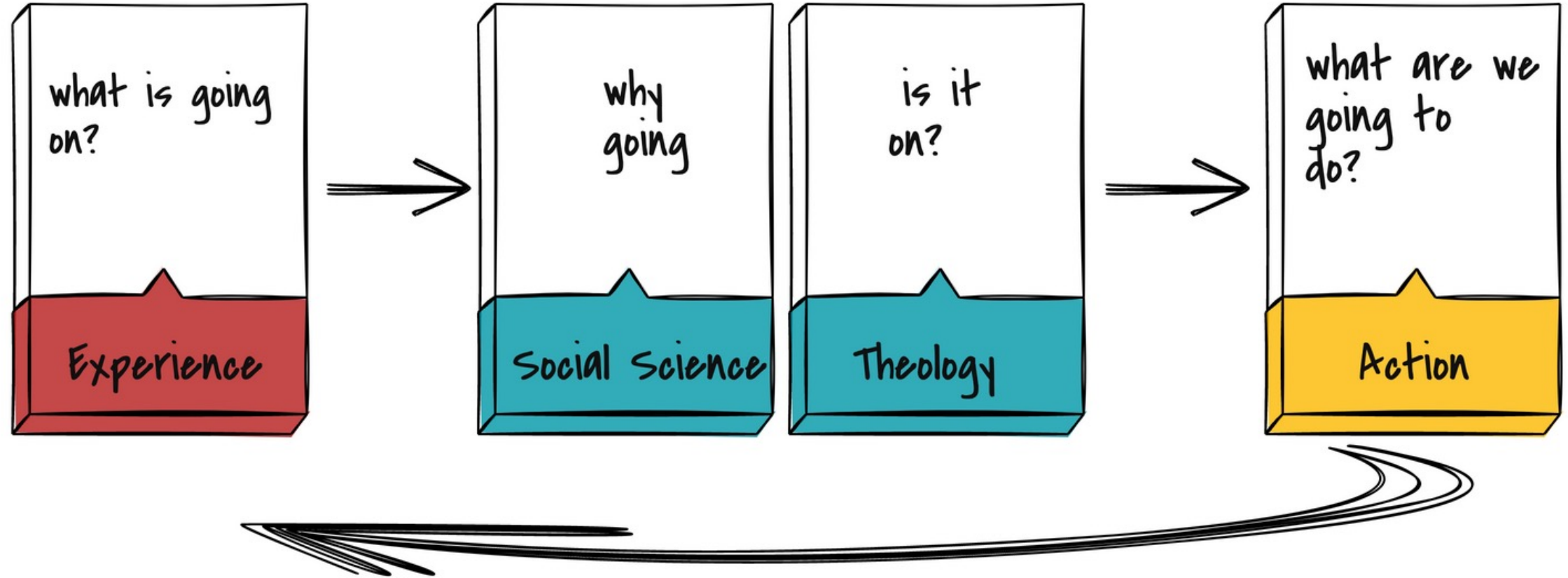
What's going on?

Ministerial Leadership for the Mission (2) – parishioners (and other laity)

- Emergence of 'lay ecclesial ministers'
- School principals, RECs, and Family Educators increasingly being asked to do something about evangelization
- Parishioners who want to do something but don't know what to do either
- Parishioners who are trying to make something happen, but cannot because they don't have the priest's backing
- Parishioners who think that 'ministry' is something that only the priest can do (e.g. prayer ministry)
- Enthusiasm and suspicion about synodality too.



Practical Theological Method



Why is it going on (and what should be going on)? The Identity and Role of Priests & Laity

- Theological Questions involved (more than sociological or personal questions, although these come into it)
- Looking for clarity about what is ok and what's not ok for priests and parishioners (and other laity)
- We therefore must understand the role of both more clearly
- (And we will try and understand synodality a little more clearly along the way too)



Where do we go for Theological Clarity?

- Scriptures – picture of ministry in the NT
 - Apostles, presbyters (priests), deacons, prophets, teachers (emerging roles)
 - Charisms
- Tradition
 - Post-Apostolic Church
 - Emergence of episkopoi (bishops) successors of the Apostles (Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus of Lyons) – clearer depiction of Bishop-Priest-Deacon
 - Charisms – slowly come to be considered as predominantly residing in the clergy and saints
 - Renewal and Missionary Movements
 - Often begin as lay movements, but become religious or consecrated (e.g. Benedictines and Franciscans)
 - 19th c great missionary explosion – religious priests, brothers, and consecrated women
 - Some movements remained lay, but still look consecrated – usually involving celibate commitment)
 - Non-clerical roles – ‘catechist’ in some parts of the world



Where do we go for Theological Clarity (2)?

- Magisterial Teaching
 - Vatican II
 - *Lumen Gentium - Light to the Nations* (on the Church)
 - *Presbyterum Ordinis – The Order of Priests* (on Priesthood)
 - *Apostolicam Actuositatem – Apostolic Activity* (on the Laity)
- Papal Teaching
 - *Christifidelis Laici – Lay members of Christ's Faithful People* (on the Laity (1988))
 - *Pastores Dabo Vobis – I will give you Shepherds* (on the Formation of Priests (1992))
 - Both by John Paul II



Church as Mystery, Communion, and Mission

- Start with ecclesiology (the theology of the Church) - before we get to the identity and role of laity and clergy, begin with identity and mission of the Church
- “The Church ... is *mystery* because the very life and love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the gift gratuitously offered to all those who are born of water and the Holy Spirit (cf. *Jn* 3:5), and called to relive the very *communion* of God and to manifest it and communicate it in history (*mission*)” (*Christifidelis Laici* (CL) 8).
- “Only from inside the Church’s *mystery of communion* is the “*identity*” of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined: (CL 8).



Clarifying our Terms – Who are the Laity or Lay faithful?

- Laity – from the Greek, ‘the people’ (‘the faithful’ - everyone)
- Vatican II goes beyond negative definitions – beyond “not-priests”
- Vat II asserts the “Full belonging of the lay faithful to the Church and to its *mystery*” (CL 9): mystery means we need to understand the lay faithful in *sacramental* terms



Clarifying our Terms – Who are the Laity or Lay faithful (2)?

- “The term “laity” is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who *by Baptism are incorporated into Christ*, are placed in the People of God, and *in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ*, and to the best of their ability carry on *the mission* of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world” (LG 31, italics mine).
- Mystery – baptism
- Communion – Placed in the people of God
- Mission – carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world



Mystery and Communion

- Incorporated (in-bodied) into Christ through baptism
- *Baptism regenerates us in the life of the Son of God; unites us to Christ and to his Body, the Church; and anoints us in the Holy Spirit, making us spiritual temples (CL 10)*
- Through baptism – we enter into the communion of the Church, unity with one another in Christ



Mission - Priest, Prophet, and King

- Through baptism, the lay faithful share in the mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King
- The lay faithful are sharers in the *priestly* mission, for which Jesus offered himself on the cross and continues to be offered in the celebration of the Eucharist for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity. Incorporated in Jesus Christ, the baptized are united to him and to his sacrifice in the offering they make of themselves and their daily activities (cf. Rom 12:1, 2). Speaking of the lay faithful the Council says: “For their work, prayers and apostolic endeavours, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labour, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life if patiently borne—all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pt 2:5). (CL 14)



Mission - Priest, Prophet, and King

- Through their participation in the *prophetic* mission of Christ, “who proclaimed the kingdom of his Father by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word”(24), the lay faithful are given the ability and responsibility to accept the gospel in faith and to proclaim it in word and deed, without hesitating to courageously identify and denounce evil (CL 14)



Mission - Priest, Prophet, and King

- Because the lay faithful belong to Christ, Lord and King of the Universe, they share in his *kingly* mission and are called by him to spread that Kingdom in history. They exercise their kingship as Christians, above all in the spiritual combat in which they seek to overcome in themselves the kingdom of sin (cf. Rom 6:12), and then to make a gift of themselves so as to serve, in justice and in charity, Jesus who is himself present in all his brothers and sisters, above all in the very least (cf. Mt 25:40). (CL 14)



Mission – Priest, Prophet, and King

- *“the unique character of their vocation, which is in a special way to ‘seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God’ (CL 9, quoting LG 31)*
- “secular character” of the lay vocation (LG 31)
- Live “in the world” – to be sanctified by Jesus through them
- “The “world” thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined to glorify God the Father in Christ” (CL 15)



Bishops and Priests

- “In him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood; they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Therefore, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body; but each one ought to hallow Jesus in his heart, and in the spirit of prophecy bear witness to Jesus”. (Presbyterorum Ordinis 2)
- “Christ, whom the Father hallowed and sent into the world (Jn. 10:36), has, through his apostles, made their successors, the bishops namely, sharers in his consecration and mission”;
- “and these, in their turn, duly entrusted in varying degrees various members of the Church with the office of their ministry. Thus the divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests and deacons”.
- “Whilst not having the supreme degree of the pontifical office, and notwithstanding the fact that they depend on the bishops in the exercise of their own proper power, the priests are for all that associated with them by reason of their sacerdotal dignity; and in virtue of the sacrament of Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest (Heb. 5:1–10; 7:24; 9:11–28), they are consecrated in order to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament”. LG 28



Priests at service of the Church as mystery, communion and mission

- “the priest is a servant of the *Church as mystery* because he actuates the Church’s sacramental signs of the presence of the risen Christ.
- He is a servant of the *Church as communion* because—in union with the bishop and closely related to the presbyterate—he builds up the unity of the Church community in the harmony of diverse vocations, charisms and services.
- Finally, the priest is a servant to the *Church as mission* because he makes the community a herald and witness of the Gospel.” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 16)



Priesthood of the Laity and the Ministerial Priesthood

- “*Though they differ essentially and not only in degree*, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ.
- The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people.
- The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity”. (*Lumen Gentium* 10)



Ordered to One Another

- “For this reason, so as to assure and to increase communion in the Church, particularly in those places where there is a diversity and complementarity of ministries, Pastors must always acknowledge that their ministry is fundamentally ordered to the service of the entire People of God (cf. Heb 5:1).
- The lay faithful, in turn, must acknowledge that the ministerial priesthood is totally necessary for their participation in the mission in the Church” (CL 22)



Ministries

- “The Holy Spirit ... lavishes diverse hierarchical and charismatic gifts on all the baptized, calling them to be, each in an individual way, active and co-responsible”. (CL 21)
- Ministries Derived from Holy Orders – a service (diakonia) in the person of Christ the Head, gathering the Church in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Sacraments
- Ministries of the lay faithful – derived from Baptism, Confirmation, (and for many, Matrimony also)



The Fundamental Ministries of the Lay Faithful

- Through Baptism, Confirmation, (and Matrimony)
- Evangelization of individuals
- Evangelization in the areas of politics, society, economics, cultures, sciences, the arts, international life, media, human love, the family, education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering – the ‘secular’ world



Lay Ecclesial Ministry

- “When necessity and expediency in the Church require it, the Pastors, according to established norms from universal law, can entrust to the lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their pastoral ministry but do not require the character of Orders” (CL 23)
- Could be a share in the priestly, prophetic, or kingly mission
- Eg. Priestly – liturgical ministries such as extraordinary minister of communion, lector,
- Eg. Prophetic – catechists
- Eg. Kingly (Shepherd) – Parish Pastoral Council, Senior Leadership Team, also visitation to the sick



Charisms

- Re-cap – what’s a charism?
- “Whether they be exceptional and great or simple and ordinary, the charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit that have, directly or indirectly, a usefulness for the ecclesial community, ordered as they are to the building up of the Church, to the well-being of humanity and to the needs of the world” (CL 24)
- “no charism dispenses a person from reference and submission to the Pastors of the Church. The Council clearly states: “Judgment as to their (charisms) genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church, and to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (cf. 1 Thess 5:12 and 19–21)”, so that all the charisms might work together, in their diversity and complementarity, for the common good.” (CL 24)
- In the first place, charisms of the lay faithful are for their “secular vocation”
- But also for the upbuilding of the Church



Co-Responsibility

- This mutual ordering of the priesthood of the lay faithful and the ministerial priesthood to one another means that they are *co-responsible* for the Church's mission



Co-Responsibility

“By reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have the laity are empowered—indeed sometimes obliged—to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. 124 If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ”. LG 37



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Co-responsibility

- “The pastors, indeed, should recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church.
- They should willingly use their prudent advice and confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, leaving them freedom and scope for acting.
- Indeed, they should give them the courage to undertake works on their own initiative.
- They should with paternal love consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity.
- Moreover the pastors must respect and recognize the liberty which belongs to all in the terrestrial city.” (LG 37)



Co-responsibility

“Many benefits for the Church are to be expected from this familiar relationship between the laity and the pastors. The sense of their own responsibility is strengthened in the laity, their zeal is encouraged, they are more ready to unite their energies to the work of their pastors. The latter, helped by the experience of the laity, are in a position to judge more clearly and more appropriately in spiritual as well as in temporal matters. Strengthened by all her members, the Church can thus more effectively fulfil her mission for the life of the world.” (LG 37)



Co-responsibility in Decision- Making?

- Diocesan Pastoral Councils –
 - The recent Synod [1987] has favored the creation of Diocesan Pastoral Councils, as a recourse at opportune times. In fact, on a diocesan level this structure could be the principle form of collaboration, dialogue, and discernment as well. The participation of the lay faithful in these Councils can broaden resources in consultation and the principle of collaboration-and in certain instances also in decision-making—if applied in a broad and determined manner (CL 25)



Co-responsibility for Pastoral Responsibilities?

- The Synod Fathers for their part have given much attention to the present state of many parishes and have called for a greater effort in their renewal: “Many parishes, whether established in regions affected by urban progress or in missionary territory, cannot do their work effectively because they lack material resources or ordained men or are too big geographically or because of the particular circumstances of some Christians (e.g. exiles and migrants).
- So that all parishes of this kind may be truly communities of Christians, local ecclesial authorities ought to foster the following:
 - a) adaptation of parish structures according to the full flexibility granted by canon law, especially in promoting participation by the lay faithful in pastoral responsibilities;
 - b) small, basic or so-called “living” communities, where the faithful can communicate the Word of God and express it in service and love to one another; these communities are true expressions of ecclesial communion and centers of evangelization, in communion with their pastors” (CL 26)



Co-responsibility

“An example comes to mind in the participation of women on diocesan and parochial Pastoral Councils as well as Diocesan Synods and particular Councils. In this regard the Synod Fathers have written:

“Without discrimination women should be participants in the life of the Church, and also in consultation and the process of coming to decisions”(192). And again: “Women, who already hold places of great importance in transmitting the faith and offering every kind of service in the life of the Church, ought to be associated in the preparation of pastoral and missionary documents and ought to be recognized as cooperators in the mission of the church in the family, in professional life and in the civil community” (CFL 51)



Apostolic Commitment in the Parish

- It is now necessary to look more closely at the communion and participation of the lay faithful in parish life ... “Their activity within Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the Pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness”.
- This is indeed a particularly important affirmation, which evidently must be interpreted in light of the “ecclesiology of communion”. Ministries and charisms, being diverse and complementary, are all necessary for the Church to grow, each in its own way.



Apostolic Commitment in the Parish

- “The parish offers an outstanding example of the apostolate on the community level, inasmuch as it brings together the many human differences found within its boundaries and draws them into the universality of the Church.
- The lay faithful should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world’s problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which need to be examined together and solved through general discussion.



Apostolic Commitment in the Parish

- As far as possible the lay faithful ought to collaborate in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their own ecclesial family”.
- The Council’s mention of examining and solving pastoral problems “by general discussion” ought to find its adequate and structured development through a more convinced, extensive and decided appreciation for “Parish Pastoral Councils”, on which the Synod Fathers have rightly insisted.
- In the present circumstances the lay faithful have the ability to do very much and, therefore, ought to do very much towards the growth of an authentic ecclesial communion in their parishes in order to reawaken missionary zeal towards nonbelievers and believers themselves who have abandoned the faith or grown lax in the Christian life.



Synodality

- New word – but has its origins in Scripture and the Tradition
- We spoke of the Church as mystery, communion, and mission
- If “mission is accomplished in communion” (CL32), then synodality might best be understood as *the concrete expressions of communion by which the mission is accomplished*.
- “the words ‘communion’ and ‘mission’ can risk remaining somewhat abstract” (Pope Francis)
- unless we genuinely undertake a journey together to ensure that our praxis, our activity as a Church, entails the real and genuine participation of all the People of God.
- To be synodal then is to simultaneously make both communion and mission real and concrete through the wide and generous participation of the whole Church.
- Synodal participation is the Church’s *modus vivendi et operandi*,
- her methodology for living out communion in practical ways as we undertake the mission (cf. ITC, SLMC , 43).
- Synodality, properly understood then, is not an option for the Church among other modalities but is rather our basic way of proceeding together.



Identity, Mission and Purpose of the Church

- The Church as mystery and communion gives us our identity (our Who?)
- The Church as mission gives us our purpose (our Why?)
- Synodality is in a certain sense, *our How* – our how we live out communion and mission

Synodality, the methodology of communion, must always be at the service of the mission



Synodality

- Is realized fully in the Eucharist – the embodiment (literally) of our *communion* and *mission* in Christ
- Is a Work of the Holy Spirit
 - So should be grounded in prayer
 - Is profoundly about dialogue in which we listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to us through others – spiritual conversation tool
 - This requires us to listen widely and broadly – not just to loudest voices or the most involved, but also to marginalized, disadvantaged, disenfranchised (communion in space)
 - Communion in time – listening also to the voices of the past – Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium (*Ressourcement* for *Aggiornamento* again)
 - Requires Discernment to sift these many and disparate voices



What Synodality is not nor cannot be

- A methodology (perhaps by stealth) for changing doctrine
- A democratic process for deciding what we believe or what we should do



Where does all this Teaching Leave us?

- The primary vocation of the lay faithful is the evangelization of the world and the sanctification of the temporal order
- The lay faithful *lead* in this sphere by virtue of their baptism, confirmation (and reception of matrimony).
- They do not need permission from the priest to lead in this sphere, but they should always seek to act in collaboration with the priest because they are co-responsible for the mission.



Where does all this Teaching Leave us?

- The lay faithful are also encouraged to bring their gifts to ministry in the Church (the parish). This may be by sharing in the priestly, prophetic, or kingly dimension of the priest's ministry.
- When they do this, they are sharing in the ministry proper to the priest – it is in that sense an extraordinary exercise of ministry
- This is delegated by the priest – because it is a share in the ministry proper to him
- This ministry includes the area of leadership – we saw the encouragement of diocesan and parish pastoral councils (and we can add Senior Leadership Teams)
- Parish Priests are encouraged to engage the lay faithful in the exercise of their leadership, although the ultimate decision-making authority rests with them



Where does all this Teaching Leave us?

- Synodality calls for a greater participation of all – place for parish wide listening and discernment
- Also calls for greater participation in decision-making processes
- Synodality does not violate the principle of co-responsibility between priest and lay faithful - they are responsible for the mission in different ways because they share differently in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ,
- but they are called to a high level of care for one another

