

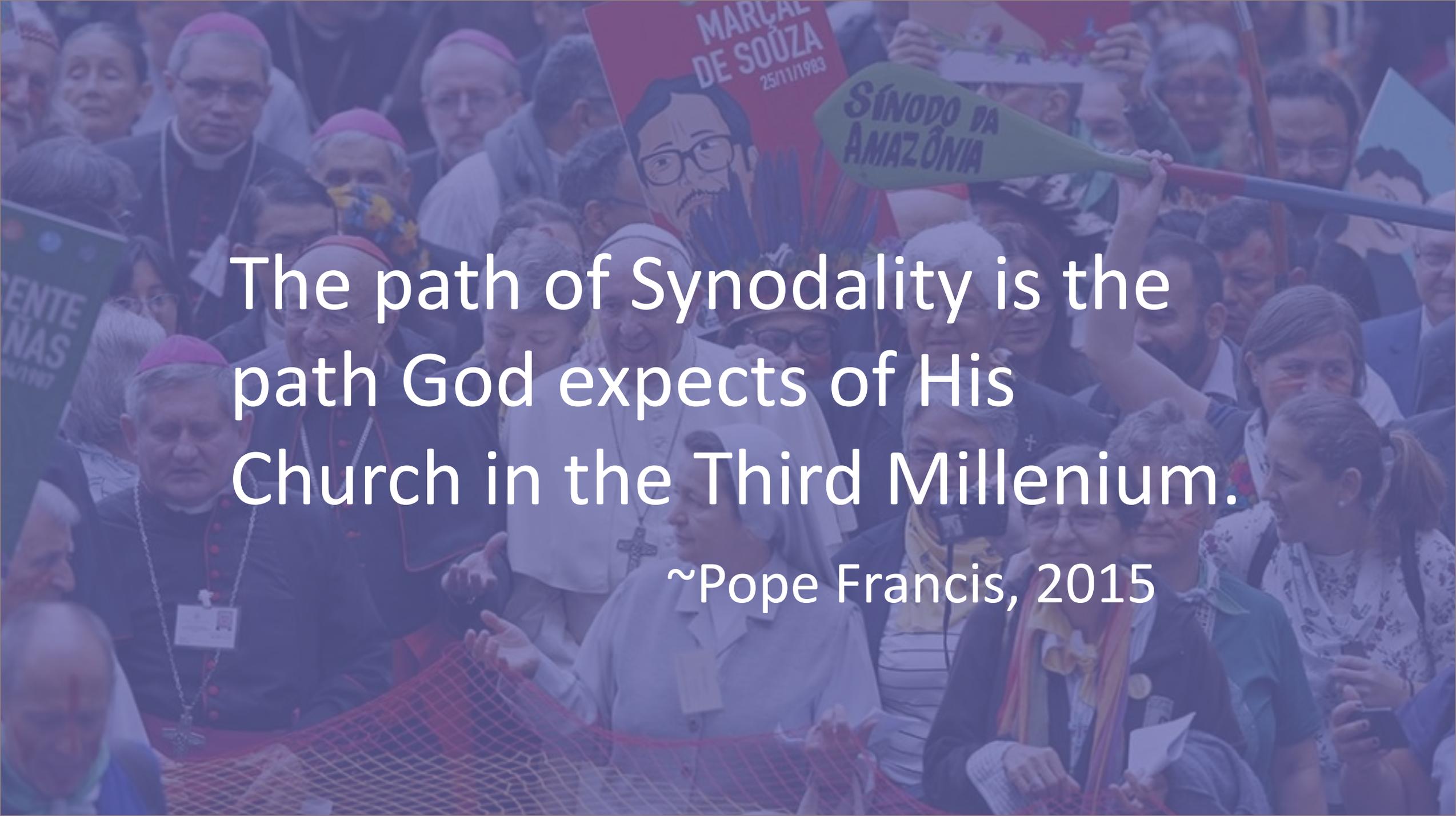
The background features a solid blue gradient with a series of thin, white, flowing lines that create a sense of movement and depth, resembling waves or a stylized landscape.

SYNODALITY
A NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH



FORWARD

Peter Hünermann

A large crowd of people, including many clergy members, gathered for a synod. Some are holding signs, one of which reads "SÍNODO DA AMAZÔNIA".

The path of Synodality is the path God expects of His Church in the Third Millennium.

~Pope Francis, 2015

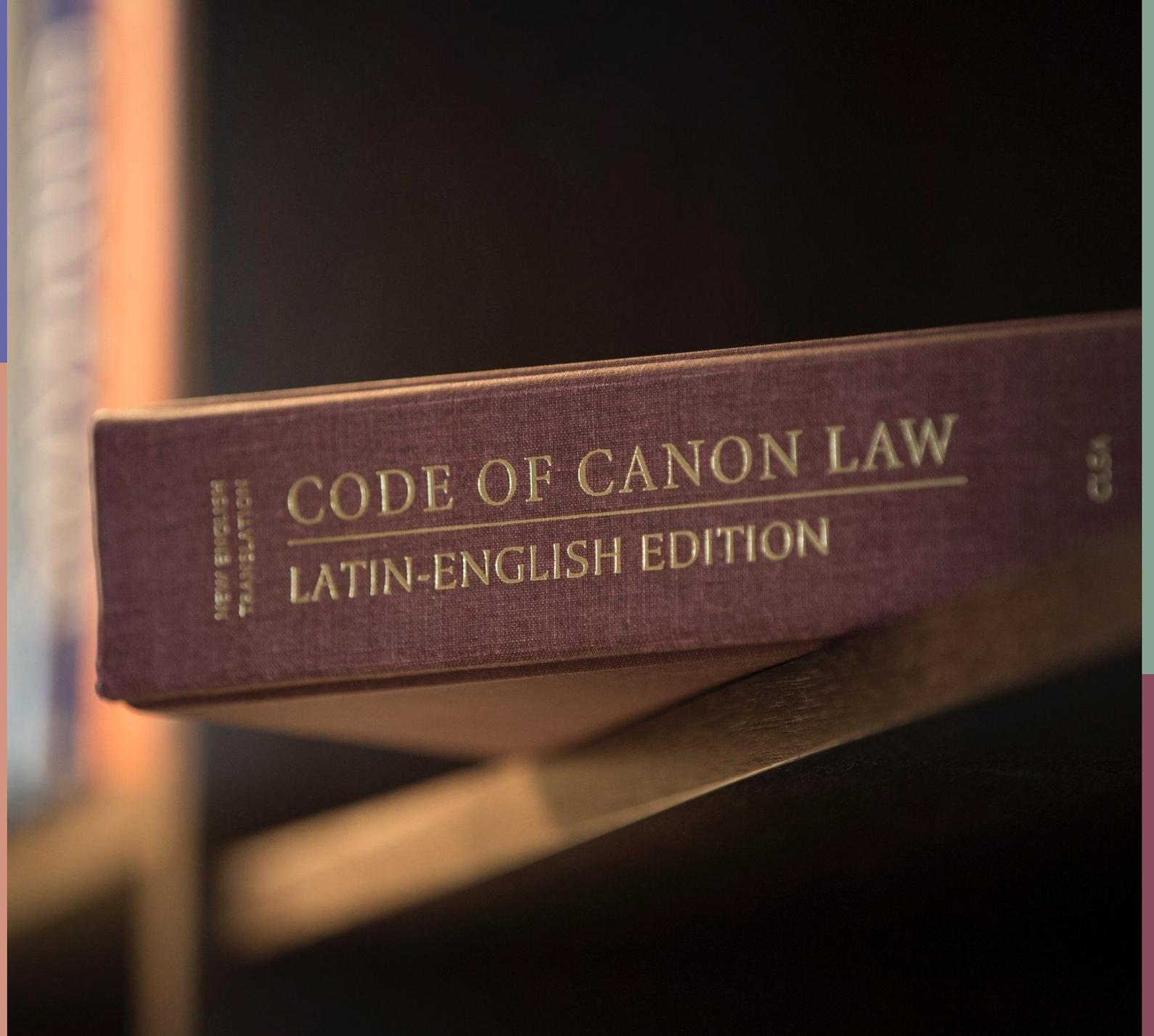
A man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt, is seated at a table and speaking into a microphone. He is looking down at a device on the table. The background shows a whiteboard and a window. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

A synodal Church must be characterized by a dynamic of communion that should be reflected all ecclesial decisions.

Why hasn't it happened?

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES

- Canon Law creates and protects abusive system
 - no independent system of justice in the Church
 - no independent process of legislation and prosecution.
- CLERGY SEX ABUSE & COVERUP
- FINANCIAL ABUSE

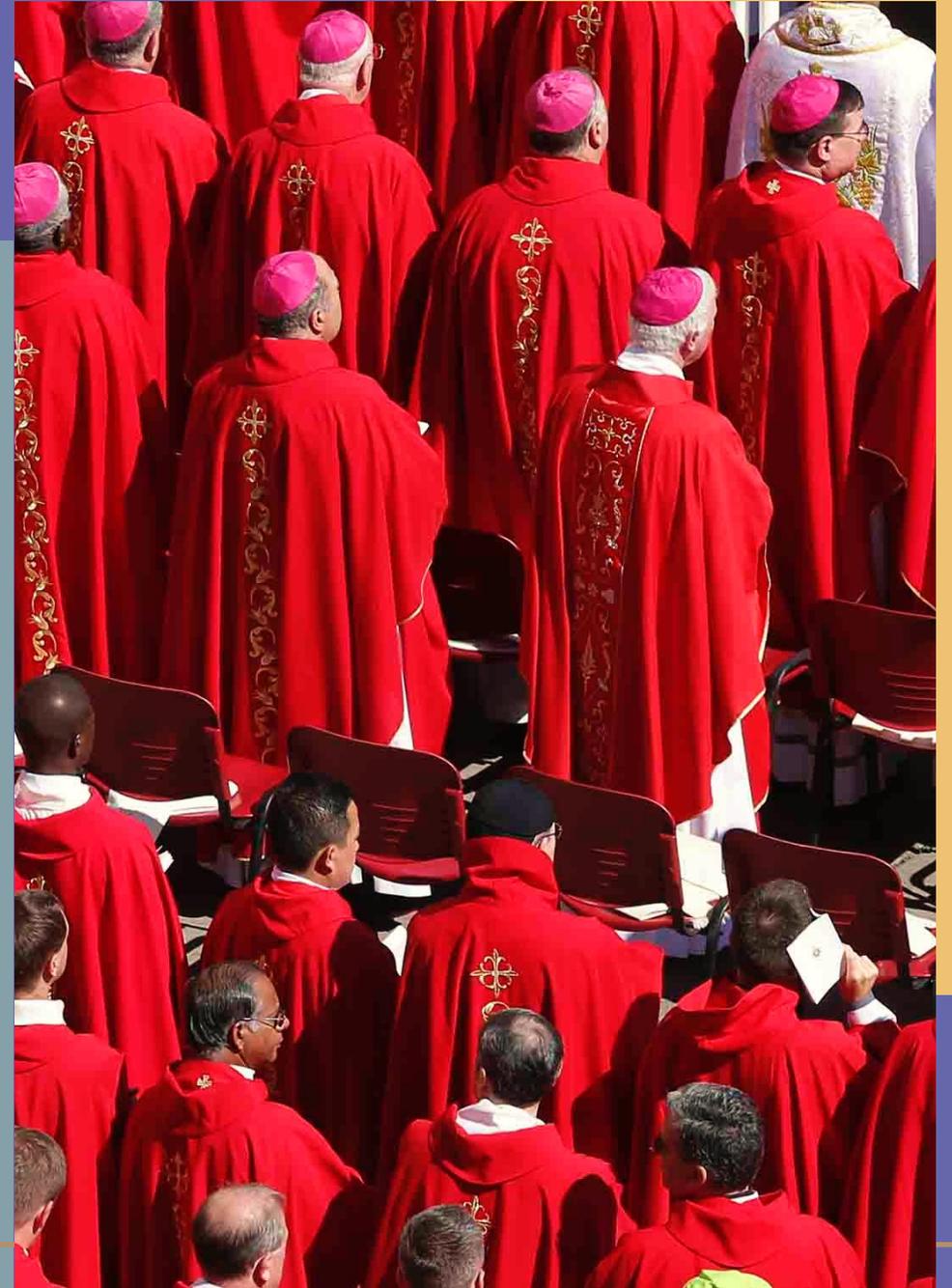


THE CORRUPTING SYSTEM CLERICALISM

In the bishop, the executive, judicative, and legislative power is united – under his authority.

He is his own judge and controller. This conception is reminiscent of the constitutional form of small absolutist principalities in the eighteenth century.

CANON LAW PROTECTS THE CLERICALIST SYSTEM



ONLY ONE WAY OUT *SYNODALITY*

Synodality – the involvement of the people of God as an active subject in the fundamental decision-making processes of the the Church --- offers the ONLY way out of the clericalist system, the scandals and the corruption.





AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

Only through a new system of governance that is rooted in functional independence and autonomy can a Church, *founded by revelation*, be *manageable, functional, credible and trustworthy today.*

TIME, EDUCATION, SPACE

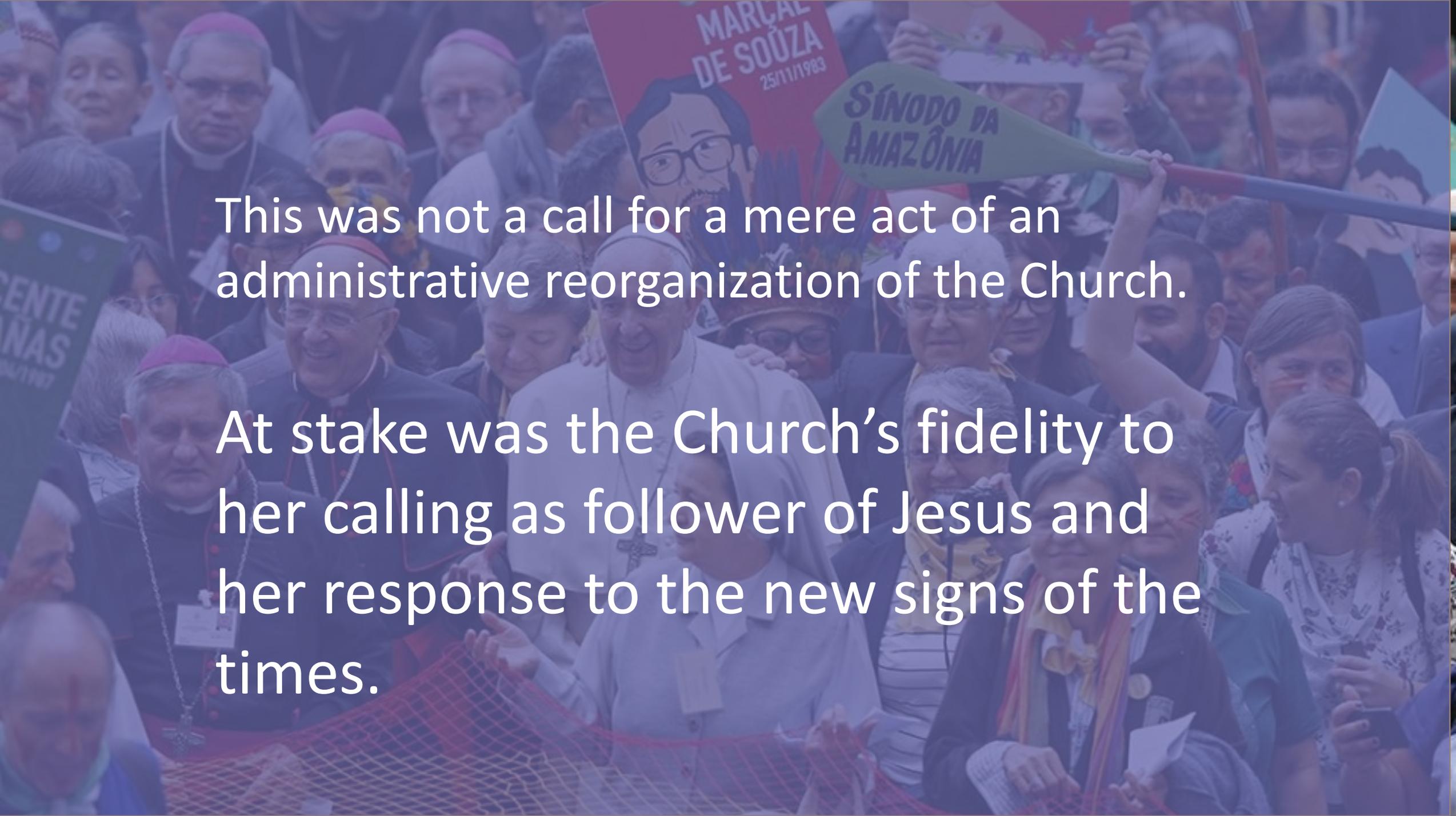
Hünemann emphasizes that this process will not take place overnight. While it must be initiated at all levels,

- We need sufficient space for the preparatory phase
- We need to prepare, educate, and train Catholics
- Canon law regulations must be handled in a relaxed manner





INTRODUCTION

A large crowd of people, including many bishops and priests, gathered for a synod. Some are holding signs, one of which reads "SÍNODO DA AMAZÔNIA".

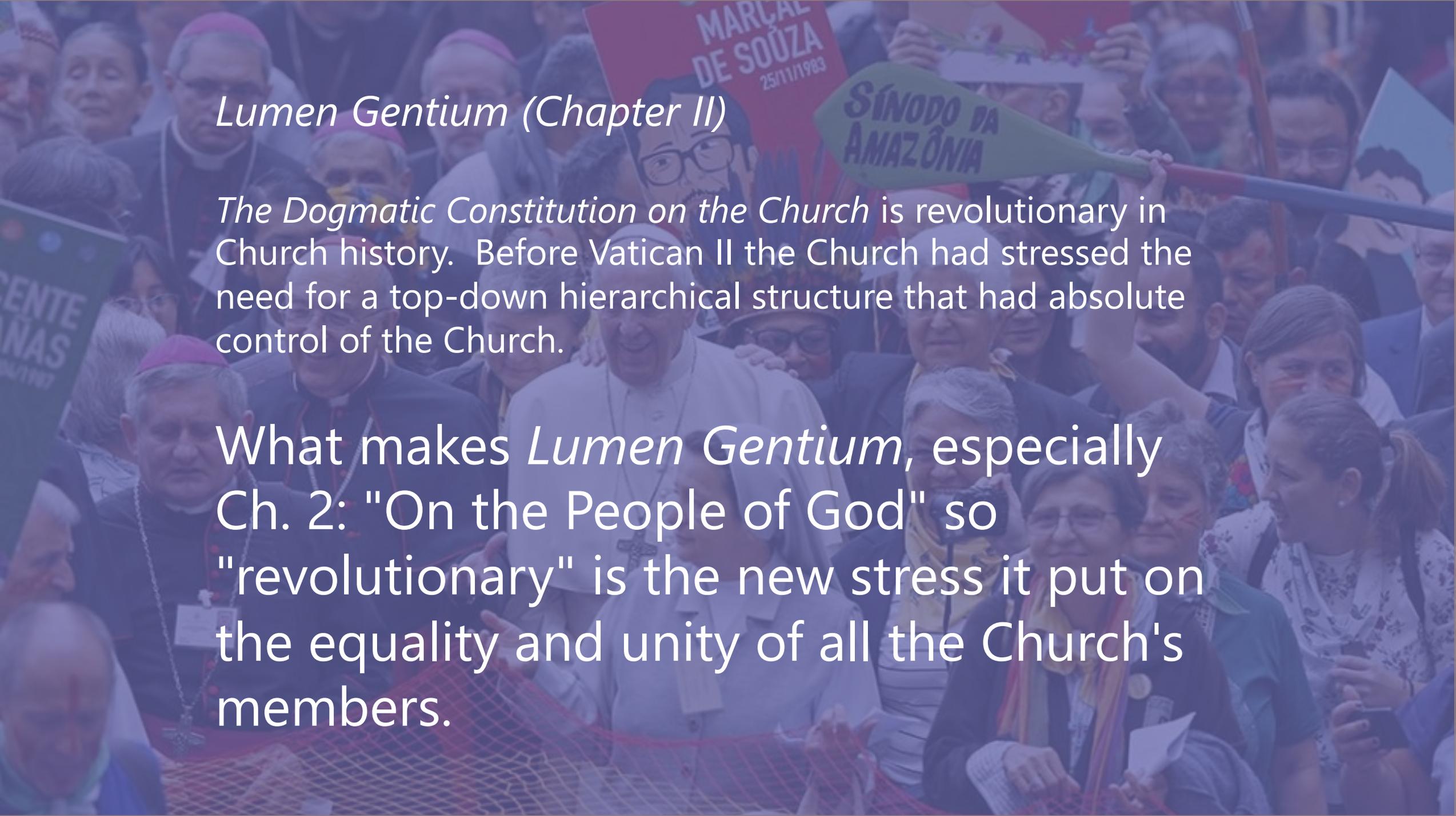
This was not a call for a mere act of an administrative reorganization of the Church.

At stake was the Church's fidelity to her calling as follower of Jesus and her response to the new signs of the times.

THE FRANCIS REVOLUTION

...rooted in the ecclesiology of the people of God, understanding the normativity of Lumen Gentium (Ch.2), the Church as the People of God in the process of reconfiguring the whole Church.





Lumen Gentium (Chapter II)

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church is revolutionary in Church history. Before Vatican II the Church had stressed the need for a top-down hierarchical structure that had absolute control of the Church.

What makes *Lumen Gentium*, especially Ch. 2: "On the People of God" so "revolutionary" is the new stress it put on the equality and unity of all the Church's members.



Involves praying,
meeting, working
together, discerning,
making and taking
decisions together.

SYNODALITY

MORE THAN
WALKING
TOGETHER

MORE THAN
LISTENING

NOT COLLEGIALLY, NOT CONCILIARITY BUT A NEW WAY

Synodality is a fundamental redefinition of our ecclesiology – THE ECCLESIAL “WE” -- where all -- from the pope to the laity -- are equals in a communion of the faithful with the same responsibility regarding identity, vocation, and mission of the Church.





CHAPTER 1 – INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

THE CRISIS IN TRANSMISSION OF THE FAITH

Caused by the continued existence of the clerical institutional model.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Theology of
ordained ministry

Exercise of power
in hierarchy

Celibacy

Culture of secrecy

COMMON ELEMENT

Relation between
power and impotence
in hierarchy

Idea of ontological
change at ordination

Pope Francis:
"Pathology of Ecclesial
Power"



CLERICALISM PRODUCES

- AN ONTOLOGICALLY UNEQUAL SOCIETY
- A DUAL MODEL OF CHURCH WITH CLERICAL SUPERIORITY & LAY INFERIORITY



CHAPTER 2 – PASTORAL CONVERSION

PASTORAL CONVERSION IS ESSENTIAL... FOR REAL ECCLESIAL REFORM

WE MUST BE MISSION ORIENTED

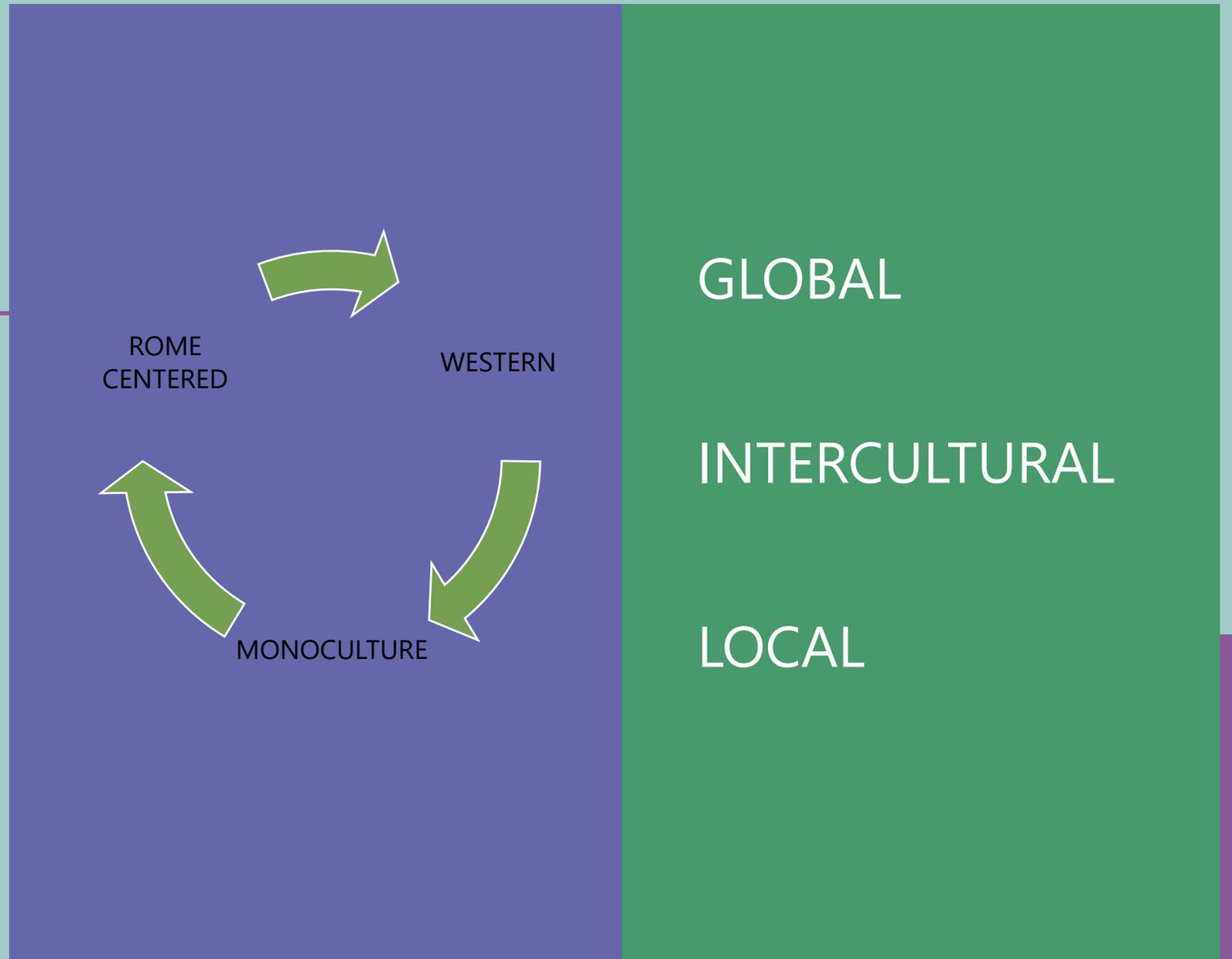
"I dream of a missionary option"...a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that Church customs, ways of doing things, language and structures can be channeled for evangelization...not self preservation." EG 27

Francis's reforms are rooted in Pastoral & Synodal conversion demanding:

- A revision of lifestyles (care for those at the peripheries)
- New practices of communal discernment
- Ecclesial structural reform

THE NEW PHASE

...of pastoral conversion and synodal practice will lead to a reordering of the influencers who have historically shaped the teachings, policies, theologies, laws, and practice of the universal church.



CO-RESPONSIBILITY IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL, BUT ESSENTIAL

Capable of co-sharing the power of jurisdiction with those who do not have the power of orders.





CHAPTER 3 INTRO TO SYNODALITY

Although not new, synodality is coming to us in a new, more dynamic way-- allowing us to reconfigure the culture and practice of our Church.



Synodality allows us to create new relationships & processes so that there is unity in plurality.

A CHURCH THAT LISTENS IS A SYNODAL CHURCH

Involves more than hearing...
Involves more than relying solely on traditional mediations such as
Scripture, Prayer, etc.

It is the **intentional engagement with different points of view**, face-to-face, in the spirit of communal discernment.

BUT WHILE TRUE SYNODALITY
INVOLVES LISTENING AND
WALKING TOGETHER, IT TAKES
PLACE ONLY

*When we , as the Body of Christ,
gather and discern together in
order to make decisions about
our church.*

*And that requires mechanisms
that will institutionalize effective
and inclusive participation....*





CHAPTER 4 SYNODALITY & DECISION-MAKING

A close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and collaboration. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered over the image.

To be a synodal church means that we base our relationships on charisms and gifts rather than order and power.

The processes for elaborating and making decisions should be horizontal and circular.

REFORM OF CANON LAW IS CRITICAL TO SYNODALITY'S SUCCESS

“True synodalization of the Church must be accompanied by an organic revision of Canon Law.”

We need a non-clericalist institutional model based on LG, Chapter 2.

The reform of the 1917 Code of Canon Law published in 1983 was conceived during a phase when Vatican II was not yet fully received. That is still the case.

Yet, synodality as a deepening of the Council's vision, should lead to foundational changes in Canon Law that will allow for synodalization of the entire church.

QUICK SUMMARY

Synodality is a natural expression of the Second Vatican Council and especially Lumen Gentium's notion that the People of God share co-equal responsibility, authority and status in the Church. It is nothing less than the "Ecclesial WE" -- where all -- from the pope to the laity -- are equals in a communion of the faithful with the same responsibility regarding identity, vocation, and mission.

While synodality is rooted in listening and walking together, it must also move beyond the pastoral dimensions toward a governance model where the discernment model is non-clericalist, inclusive, and co-responsible at every level.

Given that the clericalist system is failing us, synodality – a new way of being church is the ONLY way out of the clericalist quagmire we now experience. The whole church is called to fulfill its Vatican II mandate and govern through discernment with the whole Body of Christ. At stake is the Church's fidelity to her calling as a follower of Jesus Christ and her response to the signs of the times.

Authentic synodality requires a new commitment from us:

1. We must intentionally engage different points of view, face-to-face, in the spirit of communal discernment.
2. We must be willing to be change agents at the local level.

Synodality will lead to a reordering of the influencers who have historically shaped the teachings, policies, theologies, laws, and practice of the universal church. We are moving from a Western, monocultural, Rome centered institution to a global, intercultural, and local church where independence, autonomy, and subsidiarity take primacy.

Canon law grew out of a clericalist culture and supports a clericalist institution. Ordination became an ontological mark of superiority rather than service and created a two-tier system with laity in an inferior position. For now canon law must be exercised in a relaxed mode in order to let a culture of synodality take hold. But, without a doubt, canon law must be changed to support a non-clericalist model of church authorizing the full and equal participation and co-responsibility of lay leaders, ministers, and decision-makers in the church.

SR. DONNA CIANGIO, OP

CHANCELLOR AT THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

EXPERT IN SYNODAL PROCESSES

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