

The background features a large, stylized sun in the upper left corner, with several curved, brush-like lines radiating from it across the top half of the image. At the bottom, there is a row of colorful silhouettes of people of various ages and abilities, including a person in a wheelchair, walking together.

# Introduction Spirituality of Synodality

*Fr. Donald Chambers*

# Opening Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.

**Amen**



## Course Description:

To explore the relevant features of the spirituality that undergirds the current synodal journey of the Catholic Church in the third millennium, and its relationship to the Church's tradition of Spirituality.

# Course Rationale

As a discipline, Christian spirituality studies ways in which disciples of Jesus Christ respond to the Holy Spirit who guides the Church's mission. The purpose, therefore, of this course is **to expose and deepen the participants consciousness to the uniqueness of the spirituality that guides the synodal journey.**



Let's share:





## Course Objectives:

- To equip participants with the **human and spiritual tools** to participate genuinely in the synodal journey
- To become informed and active facilitators in the maturing of a synodal Church
- To understand the interrelationship between the theological/Pastoral and spirituality dimensions of the synodality.



## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be prepared to:

- To live a synodal spirituality at every level of church and personal lives
- To facilitate the development of a synodal spirituality in the Church

# Living Spirituality of Synodality in this Virtual Space. In this conversational space . . .

- Honest speaking and authentic listening
- Learning together
- Respect - time, views, persons
- Sharing the space/allowing the “shy” person to speak
- Openness to grow - conversion
- Willingness to say, “I don’t know” or “what do I need to learn today?”
- Raise hand function

# Definition of Spirituality:

Spirituality refers to the (1) lived experience and (2) to the academic discipline of studying that lived experience.

- “For Christians, it means one’s entire life as understood, felt, imagined, and decided upon in relationship to God, in Christ Jesus, empowered by the Spirit” (Joann Wolksi Conn).
- It is “to live by the **Spirit** according to the gospel and to follow Jesus Christ with the help of the Church--whatever the epoch, whatever the society, whatever the culture, whatever the personal circumstances” (Segundo Galilea).

# What is the source and form of spirituality and spiritual expressions?



...HE GAVE THE RIGHT  
TO BECOME GOD'S  
CHILDREN **TO EVERYONE**  
WHO BELIEVED IN HIM.

JOHN 1:12 GOD'S WORD TRANSLATION

*"These things we also*  
**SPEAK,**

*not in words which man's wisdom*  
**teaches but which**  
*the Holy Spirit teaches,*  
*comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*

(I Corinthians 2:13)



FOR YOU DID NOT RECEIVE  
A **SPIRIT** THAT MAKES YOU A  
**SLAVE** TO **FEAR**  
*but you received a*  
**SPIRIT** *of* **SONSHIP**  
**AND BY HIM WE CRY**  
*"ABBA FATHER"*



ROMANS 8:15

**What remains constant is the  
work and power of the Holy Spirit  
who enables disciples of Jesus  
Christ to listen when God speaks**  
**What changes is the form/manner  
in which disciples respond based  
on the concerns of the particular  
historical and cultural context.**



# Examples of Christian Spirituality

1. The encounter with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (**ENCOUNTER**)
2. The historical context within which the **encounter** happens (**CONTEXT**). Each context raises different questions and/or concerns.

# Spirituality on the Pauline Epistles:

Paul understands the  
Christian's life as a life “**in  
Christ**”. *“I am crucified  
with **Christ**, but I live;  
yet **not** I anymore, but **Christ**  
lives in me (Galatian 2:20).*

I HAVE BEEN  
crucified WITH Christ  
AND I NO LONGER LIVE, BUT  
Christ lives in me.  
THE LIFE I NOW LIVE  
IN THE BODY,  
I LIVE BY faith IN THE  
SON OF GOD,  
WHO loved ME AND gave  
HIMSELF FOR ME.

~ GALATIANS 2:20 ~

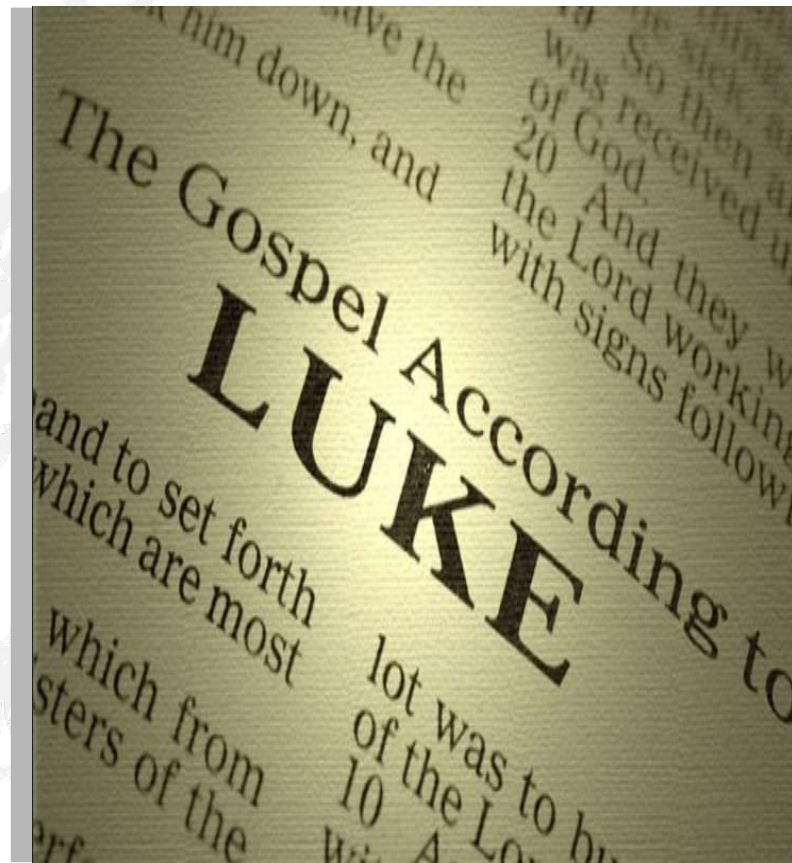
# What does everyday experience “in Christ” look like for Paul?

- Bearing one another's burden ( Romans 8:2)
- Giving and receiving the Spirit's gifts which build up the Body of Christ ( 1 Corinthians 12).
- Offering ourselves as a living sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (Romans 12: 1)
- Eating a meal of unity and love (remembering Christ's love (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
- Renews our faith in God's re-creating action in Christ (New Adam).

# Spirituality in Luke's Gospel (80-85AD):

## Spirituality of Inclusion:

The Holy Spirit guides the Inclusive mission (concern for the socio-economic poor, women, gentiles, widows) of the Church.



## Spirituality in John's Gospel (95 -100 AD):

Spirituality: “Being in the world, but not of the world” (John 15:19cf).

Holy Spirit leads the Church to the truth



## Ascetic Spirituality:

Ascetic Spirituality developed as counter-cultural movement among Christians against the Roman world.

### What is Ascetic Spirituality?

- Ascetic Spirituality generally refers to the practice of the denial of the physical or psychological human desires in order to attain a spiritual goal.

## Medieval Spirituality (5<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Century):

This spirituality emerged out of a period of social and religious decadence, wars (the Crusades 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century), religious divisions (East and West), plagues (Bubonic plague 14<sup>th</sup> century). There were two kinds of spirituality emerging in this period referred to as

**Popular Spirituality and Professional Spirituality.**

## Spirituality of Times of Emancipation:

The Spirituality of the slaves evolved out of a forced context – forced migration, forced labour, enforced religion, and forced negation, negation of self, culture, religion, and a reinterpretation of a European packaged Christian message and cosmology.



## Spirituality in the Life of the Church since Vatican II:

“Throw open the windows of the church and let the fresh air of the spirit blow through.”

John XXIII



**What are some  
of the features  
of this ‘fresh air  
of the spirit’?**



# Spirituality of the Post Vatican II Church:

## 1. The universal call to holiness:

- “All the faithful of whatever rank. . . are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity (*Lumen Gentium*, 40).
- Emphasis on the biblical definition of holiness as mercy, kindness, humility, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the whole church “is missionary by her very nature” (AG, 2)
- Emphasis on the egalitarian vision – lay, religious and priests became part of movements. For example, in the charismatic prayer groups where the Spirit’s gifts of leadership were sometimes recognized in women rather than priests.

# Spirituality of the Post Vatican II Church

## 2. The concept of every Christian participating in the church's mission was gradually translated into a language of universal “ministry”

- Influenced by a return to Scripture as the “pure and perennial source of the spiritual life” (*Dei Verbum*, 21), Catholics rediscovered the New Testament experience of ministry exercised by persons through mutually supporting gifts.

# Spirituality of the Post Vatican II Church

3. Reversal of the thinking of the world as the enemy of the Church or a sphere divided between the secular and the sacred.

# Spirituality in the Life of the Church since Vatican II

4. Affirmation of truth emanating from the Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and non-Christian religions and their contribution to Catholic spirituality.



# **Christian Spirituality**

**Paul  
Luke  
John**

**Ascetic  
Médiéval  
Emancipation  
VATICAN II**

**Spirituality is a creative and  
concrete response to an  
**Encounter** with Christ.  
Guided by the Holy Spirit,  
disciples discern and  
formulate how to live this life  
“in Christ” in their lived  
situations (**Contexts**)**

While the Church has developed various forms of Christian spirituality, they generally tend to reproduce and renew the essential values of the Christian spirituality such as:

- love
- prayer and contemplation
- asceticism and self-denial
- option for the poor and needy ones,
- fraternal charity,
- spiritual nourishment by the word and sacraments, plural in form, and based on the Gospel.

“There is substantially only one Christian spirituality, that is to live by the Spirit according to the gospel and to follow Jesus Christ with the help of the Church – whatever the epoch, whatever the society, whatever the culture, whatever the personal circumstance”

(Segundo Galilea, *Spirituality of Liberation*, 190)



# Question for Contemplation/Discussion:

**Identify/name some characteristic features of the dominant spirituality of your parish/religious community et al, and identify the context that shapes such a spirituality.**

# Ingredients of the Spirituality of Synodality

# 1. Liberation Spirituality or spirituality in times of liberation (Latin America)

# a. Key Themes of the Spirituality of Liberation (Segundo Galilea, *The Spirituality of Liberation*)



**HISTORICAL JESUS:** The goals, attitude, and a call to follow him. A counteraction to popular devotion in which the image of Jesus is “dehumanized”(devoid of human nature).

.....

# The Experience of life among the Poor

- Knowledge and contemplation of Jesus and the option for the poor become inseparable.
- “The poor also evangelize the Church” (Puebla)



# Charity: Expressed as Mercy and Compassion





*"When we act out of love of compassion, we share Jesus's own spirituality." (Galilea, 193)*

**Growth in Human  
Freedom: As  
integrated in the  
Christian journey of  
liberation because it  
is Christ gift and  
grace.**



# Prayer and Contemplation: Fostered and nourished by the challenge of poverty and oppression.



# INTEGRATED SPIRITUALITY

SEE

JUDGE

ACT

## 2. Pope Francis and Ignatian Spirituality of Discernment



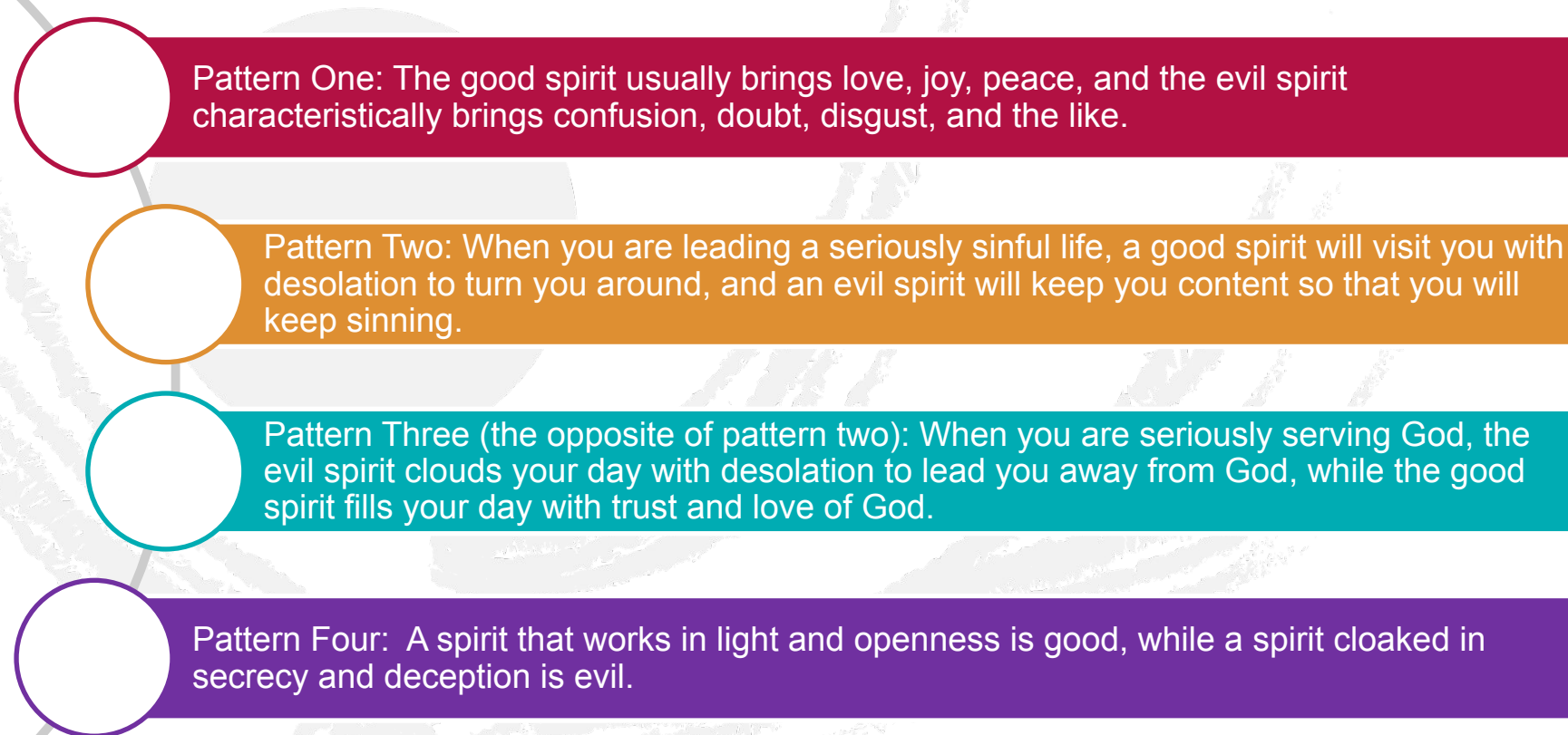
Discernment of spirits is the interpretation of what St. Ignatius Loyola called the “motions (movement) of the soul.”



“He discovered that one of the many ways God speaks to us is through our moods and emotions.”



# Some basic patterns on how the Spirit work or moves?



Pattern One: The good spirit usually brings love, joy, peace, and the evil spirit characteristically brings confusion, doubt, disgust, and the like.

Pattern Two: When you are leading a seriously sinful life, a good spirit will visit you with desolation to turn you around, and an evil spirit will keep you content so that you will keep sinning.

Pattern Three (the opposite of pattern two): When you are seriously serving God, the evil spirit clouds your day with desolation to lead you away from God, while the good spirit fills your day with trust and love of God.

Pattern Four: A spirit that works in light and openness is good, while a spirit cloaked in secrecy and deception is evil.

Discernment of the spirit is grounded in awareness of what is happening within us and what the people around us are experiencing.



# What are the focuses of this Synodal Spirituality?





“What is the Spirit saying to the Church today, and how is the Church called to respond to the contemporary context? To know what the Spirit is saying to the Church, there is need for the People of God to “listen together.”

.....

# The Spirituality of a Synodal Church:

In **communion** with Jesus Christ and each other, disciples **participate** in a journey, listening to the Holy Spirit and each other in discerning the movement of the Spirit on its mission in the contemporary world.

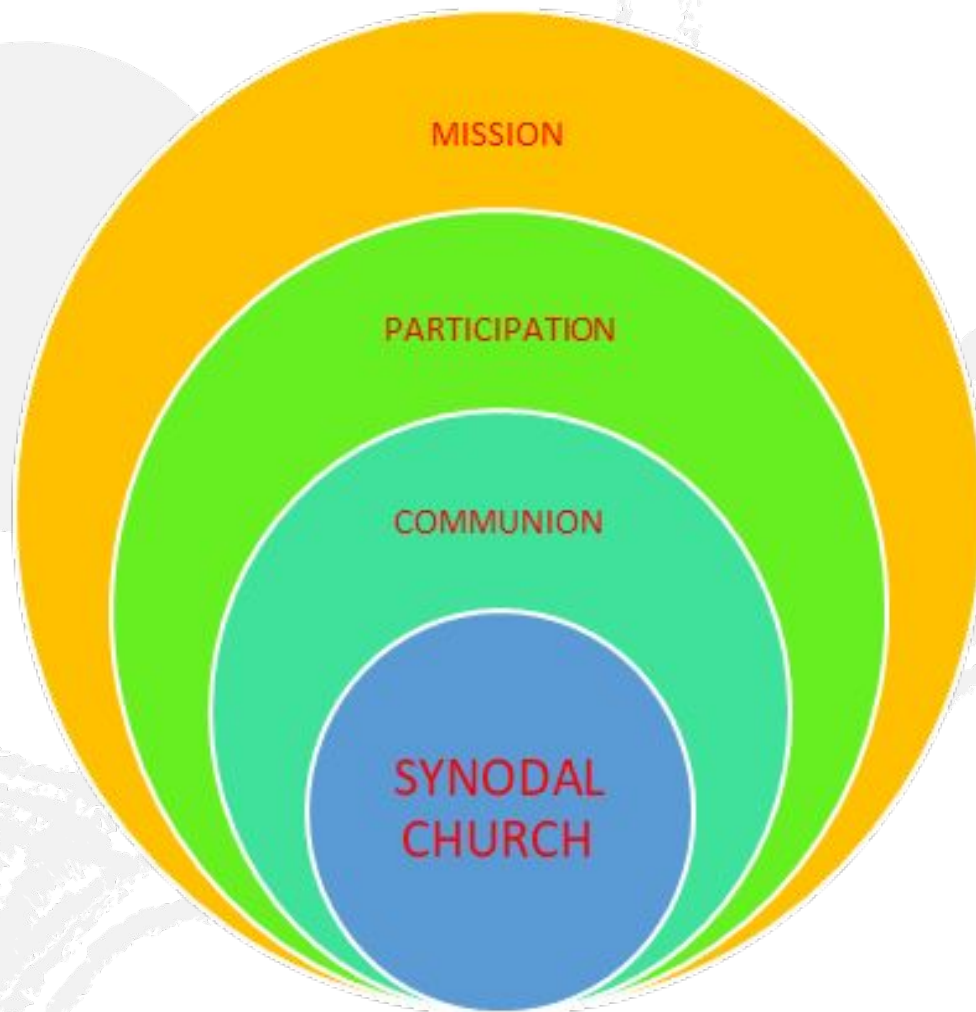


# **IT IS A MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCOVERING THAT MOVEMENT**

**“Without the Holy  
Spirit, there is no  
Synod”**

**Pope Francis**





If the Church is called to discern the movement of the Spirit in the world in which it missions, then what is the unique historical circumstances to which the Church pays attention?

“The synodal journey unfolds within a historical context marked by epochal changes in society and by a crucial transition in the life of the Church, which cannot be ignored: it is within the folds of the complexity of this context, in its tensions and contradictions, that we are called to ‘scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel’” *(Preparatory Document, #4).*

Global Tragedy of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Lack of faith and corruption within the Church

Great Hope

Conditions of some churches

“Crisis of Connection”: In this context of a “**crisis of connection**”, what does it mean for the Church to live out a synodal spirituality in the third millennium – **to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit?**



# Synodal Spirituality in the Homily of Pope Francis (October 11, 2021)

**COMMUNAL NATURE:** Pope, bishops, priests, religious and laity (Christian community) who “travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity.”



## COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

In the Church and in society we  
are side by side on the same  
road.

1. In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”?
2. Who are those who seem further apart?
3. How are we called to grow as companions?
4. What groups or individuals are left on the margins?



# ENCOUNTER



# COMPLETE PRESENCE:

- “. . . he is completely present to this person. He is open to encounter. Nothing leaves Jesus indifferent; everything is of concern to him. Encountering faces, meeting eyes, sharing each individual’s history.”
- “As we initiate this process, we too are called to become experts in the art of encounter. Time to devote to prayer and to adoration. . . and to hearing what the Spirit wants to say to the Church. Time to look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, to build rapport, to be sensitive to the questions of our sisters and brothers, to let ourselves be enriched by the variety of charism, vocations, and ministries.”



# CONVERSION

“Every encounter. . . **calls for openness, courage and a willingness to let ourselves be challenged by the presence and stories of others.** . . . the experience of encounter changes us; frequently it opens up new and unexpected possibilities . . . He invites us to leave our old habits behind. Everything changes once we are capable of genuine encounters with him and with one another. . . .”



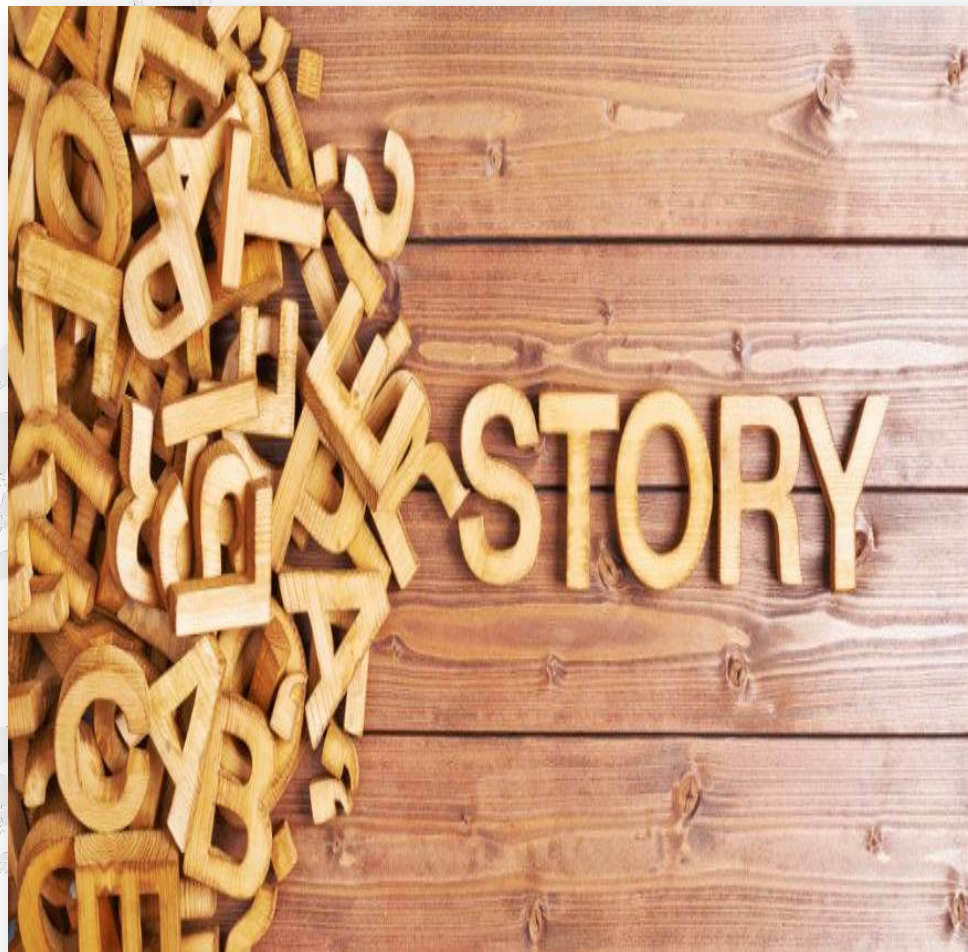
# LISTENING

# **“True encounter arises only from listening.”**

## **What happens when we listen?**



- **Listening to concerns and questions:** “Jesus listened to that man’s question and to the religious and existential concerns that lay behind it.”
- **Listening with the heart:** “. . . he is not afraid to listen to him with his heart and not just his ears.”
- **Allowance for storytelling:** “he lets him tell his story, to speak freely about himself.”



# DISCERNMENT



**“Encounter and listening**  
are not ends in themselves  
. . . On the contrary,  
whenever we enter into  
dialogue, we allow  
ourselves to be challenged,  
to advance on a journey.  
And in the end, we are no  
longer the same; we are  
changed.”

# WORD OF GOD

“It (word of God) guides the Synod, preventing it from becoming a Church convention, a study group or a political gathering, a parliament, but rather a grace-filled event, a process of healing guided by the Spirit.” (Pope Francis’ Homily)

# WORD OF GOD

Our journey of building a synodal Church is inspired by the community scene in the Gospel” (Handbook)

- Jesus - Protagonist
- Crowd
- Apostles
- Antagonists

# WORD OF GOD & SYNOD JOURNEY

The synod Journey: “If Jesus is absent. . .the Church becomes a contract between the **APOSTLES** and the **CROWD** and whose dialogue will end up following the plot of the political game. Without the **APOSTLES**, authorized by Jesus and instructed by the Spirit, the relationship with the evangelical truth is broken . . . the **CROWD**. . . remains exposed to a myth or an ideology about him. Without the **CROWD**, the **APOSTLES** relationship with Jesus becomes corrupted into a sectarian and self-referential form of religion, and evangelization . . . loses its light.”

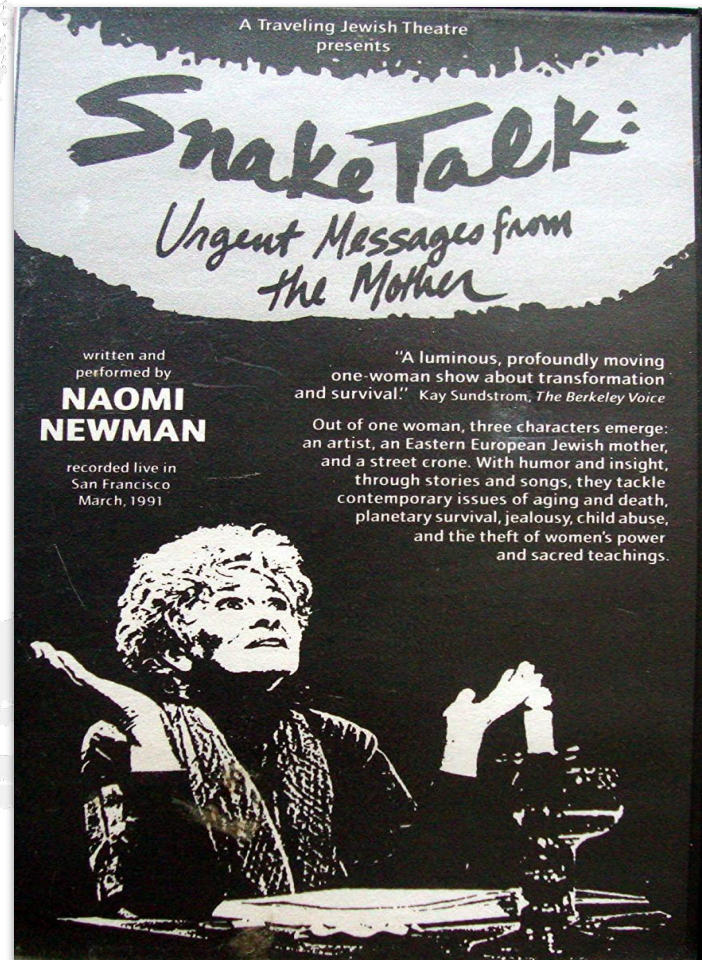
**Spirituality is a creative and  
concrete response to an  
Encounter with Christ.  
Guided by the Holy Spirit,  
disciples discern and  
formulate how to live this life  
“in Christ” in their lived  
situations (Contexts)**

**This, life in Christ, consists of  
**Accompanying** others, to discover Christ  
in the world.**



“Never pray in  
a room without  
windows.”  
The Talmud

**“NOTHING NATURAL OR INTERESTING GOES IN A STRAIGHT LINE . . . IT IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO THE WRONG PLACE. AND DON'T PRETEND YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING. BECAUSE IF YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING, THAT MEANS YOU'VE BEEN THERE AND YOU ARE GOING TO END UP EXACTLY WHERE YOU CAME FROM”**



**Identify the  
characteristic  
features of a  
synodal  
spirituality in  
the synodal  
logo?**





Thank You!