

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE IN A SYNODAL CHURCH OF ARCHDIOCESE OF MEDAN**Sr. M. Xaveria Lingga**

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Email: xave_fse@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

This artikel presents a pragmatological pastoral approach, hoping to contribute to the Church in the Archdiocese of Medan in its journeying together. Firstly, the author describes the process of the synodal process in the Archdiocese and how it finally resulted the Sintes of the Synode. Secondly, the author observes some main issues related to the Diocese. She then reflects on the inspirations of sinodality (such as walking together, listening and sharing, pastoral minister and diversity) and recontextualize it within the diocese's realities. Synodality is a call to a creative pastoral. A synodal church assumes a genuine human community that knowing and relating to one another as brothers and sisters in love. Only real communities can authentically image the church's nature, that is: sinodality. If we wish this in the AoM, then we must rediscover our Church in a new way as flowing out from a community and helping the community to discover its own nature. This, in turn, makes demands on our understanding of pastoral ministry. In the third place, the author focuses on the reviewing of pastoral approach. In a synodal Church, communion, participation and mission is complemented by various values: listening with interest, speaking out, and a deep openness to the Spirit's newness. Finally, the author identifies some practical pastoral issues that need attention in the diocese, such as synergy, involvement, affection and formation.

Keywords: Synodality, Archdiocese of Medan, Walking together, Diversity, Pastoral**INTRODUCTION**

The Synod on synodality is a three-year process of listening and dialogue (2021-2024), that asks and challenges the worldwide Church at all levels to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today. Literally synod means walking together. Synodality is how we, the Church walking together on the journey. The whole Church, from the very committed to those on the margins are invited to take part on this journey. In doing so we can discern the direction in which the Holy Spirit leads us. The Holy Father extended the invitation to the people of God, as synodality in the present circumstances is about the nature of the Church. Synodality is the Church's form, its style, its mission. He makes clear that the purpose of the Synod is not to produce more documents but rather to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be¹. In other words, we are called to learn by doing and to put into practice the synodal nature of the Church. This paper is a presentation of the synodal process in the Archdiocese of Medan by discussing some important realities. The discussion is leading to a critical reflection on the synodal pastoral.

THEORI FRAMEWORKS**1. A Glance of the Archdiocese of Medan**

The Prefecture Apostolic of Sumatera is founded in 1911, with Mgr. Liberatus Cluts, OFM Cap. as the first prefect (1912-1921). The second prefect was Mgr. Mathias Brans,

¹ *Vademecum 1.3*

OFM Cap. (1921-1954). The prefecture was officially incorporated as an Archdiocese on January 3, 1961. Its territory covers an area of 102.993 km², which includes the entire province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam and 61% of North Sumatra.

According to the statistic², the Archdioceses of Medan (further I will simply write: AoM) has 430,934 Catholics believers, spreaded in 66 parishes, grouped into 8 vicariates. These constuted by 1344 stations (*stasi*) and 3815 small communities (*lingkungan*). These great numbers of Catholics are shepherd by 146 priests working in the parishes; 66 *Parochus* and 81 parochial vicars. The vast territory and the great number of the congregation are actually disproportionate to the number of priests. In average, one priest has to shepherd three thousand people. This is very far from expectations. In most places, namely stations and small communities, the diocese has to rely on the *Pengurus Gereja* (the Lay Pastoral Minister). The lay ministers take responsibility for liturgical service and the whole pastoral care of their people. In those places the Eucharists are celebrate once a month only; in some places even less, only when the priest come to them.

2. Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Medan

To respond to the synodal invitation, the AoM started the local phase of synod on the 10th October 2021. The opening was marked by celebrating Holy Eucharist, followed by introducing the synod and its themes to the faithful. On the process, as the Indonesian Bishops Conference (*KWI*) has organized, the AoM's reflection focused on one of the ten areas of Synodality, that is the first area: *Companions on the Journey*. For this, we use two major ways of spiritual consultation, cumulative and quantitative.

For the cumulative method, the congregations, each in its own station or small community, make a group prayer. In this small group they pray together, listen to the Word of God and reflect on it together. At that moment they are also invited and encouraged to share and to speak out about themselves; how they feel as a Catholic, how they experience our Church, in their own parishes, stations and small communities, etc. Each prayer groups make a note to record the conversation, sharing and reflection. Based on these, each parish write a synthesis.

Designed for quantitative method, we distribute *questionnaire* to the representative respondent men and women based on various aspects and characteristics: age (young, adult, elderly), place (station, small community, parish /city, town, village, suburb), group (categorical, priest, religious women and men, lay people), many other backgrounds (economy, culture, education), and those who are not fully participate (the outcast) in the Church. Pope Francis asked us to reach out to the periphery, we make effort to reach those who are rarely touched by the Church and who are feeling excluded from the church, such as: elderly-young people, those with marriage problem, women, disabled, those who are not practice Catholic and those who have left the Catholic, etc. In the end we collect 18.193 exemplar return out of 21.000 distributed. These two methods, of course, not to ignore personal and informal spiritual conversations.

Based on the synthesis of 66 parishes (cumulative) and the results of processed questionnaire data (quantitative), the Synod Committee formulate the final synod synthesis of the AoM. We have to admit, it is not a hundred percent done well, but particularly we appreciate the openness of our people to express their selves. Many of them frankly tell their real experience and how do they feel about the church and ecclesial life. Sometimes it is hurts to know and to listen, but it is clear, they do so out of love for the Church.

² *BIDUK-KAM*, November 2022

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

1. Reflections on Synodality

In pastoral life, regarding synodality there are three theological principles; that of communion, participation, and mission. The spiritual consultation in the diocese on these are figuratively rich. We can highlight some significant things, which are important to note and need to reflect on.

a. Walking Together

Synodality is the essence of the Church, walking together as family of God. After more than 110 years (since the foundation of Prefecture Apostolic of Sumatera), how do the Church of AoM living out their being as a Church? How the people have been walking together? Are we really walking together? The Church is the mystical body of Christ and every member has a place in it (1Cor.12:12-31). This defines the assembly of those who gathers together forming the People of God, become the Body of Christ (CCC, 777). On the consultation many parishioners based on their real experiences said that many of them in fact are excluded from the 'our Church'. Many are leaved in the 'periphery'. Many believers are reluctant to participate in Church activities, prefer not to attend Sunday Mass or the Celebration of the Word without a Priest. Some parishioners participate for administrative reason only, means when they have an administrative-demanding, usually for the reason of baptism and matrimony. The Church in reality is confronted with many difficulties that lead us to question ourselves: Why do some people drift away from our church? How should the Church address this situation and embrace them?

Most of Catholics know that all are members of *the Church*; the hierarchies, religious women and men, and lay people, but unfortunately not all actively take part in ecclesial life. There seems to be a tendency of *knowing without doing*. People know that they are part of the Church who should be participated actively, but they do not do so. They give very little (*or not at all*) attention to the ecclesial life but rather focused on their own life only. For them, the ecclesial things are only for catechist, clergy and religious people. Meanwhile, there are parishioners who assumed that the member of the Church is those who actively participate only, such the *church goers*. For them those who are not participating are not part of the Church, even though they are baptized and administratively are called Catholic. This implies that we are not fully participating, in other words, the church is not truly walking together.

Furthermore, we need to consider the imbalance between participation in the church. The average number of male attendees in the church is extremely less in comparison to females. However, the decision-makers in in the Church are mostly men. In this context, Synodality becomes a call to encourage women to be more courageous in speaking up and expressing their opinions in ecclesial life. We need to reflect critically, whether our church really provides space for women to participate? We have to admit that sometimes the women are silencing themselves. Regardless, we, the Church should find ways to awaken women's awareness about their important role, and in the meantime providing them opportunities to participate to the fullest.

b. Listening and Sharing

One of the characteristics of synodality is listening. We need to listening to each other, listening to ourself and listening to the Holy Spirit. The majority of Catholics in the diocese are Batak people, which culturally known as *parhata* (a good speaker). In fact, this could become a potential chance for a synodal Church, as the culture of *parhata* could enrich dialogue and *sharing*. Unfortunately, it does not always happen that way. Many

people are reluctant to share their faith experiences, either because they feel inadequate, ashamed, insecure, etc. Many Catholics lack of courage to express their feelings or to share their experiences because of the situation. Many times, one feels embarrassed just to lead a prayer, whether among internal Catholics but especially during ecumenical events. Many even unwilling to lead prayers in their own families.³

1) Listening to the Holy Spirit

The achievement of synodality demands a continual relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that the dialogue between God, creation and humanity takes place. As prophet Zecharia says: 'Not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord' (Zech. 4:6). In a synodal journey, spirituality must be at the forefront of our conversion efforts. At this point we need to be careful of democratic way within the church which is also theocratic, divine dimension. While democracy prioritizes the majority of the people, theocracy prioritizes the divine word, God's will by listening to other peoples.

In ecclesial life we often focus more on program - which is important, but less space for reflection. We do many technical ways to keep the program organization and sometimes we left the Holy Spirit behind. Religiosity in daily life has been limited to more exterior expression rather than interior disposition. When interiority lives are not growing together with exterior dimension, it is impossible for us to grow in synodality. In order to be truly children of God we need to grow in spirituality and to get rid of any worldly spirit; rivalries, competitions, complexes, popularity etc.

2) Mutual Listening

In most cases we love to talk but not to listen, we prefer to speak out in order to be listened rather than listening to other people. We are reluctant to listen patiently and humbly, especially in ecclesial context. Even if we listening, we tend to listen only to those who on our side and support us, we tend to avoid those who are opposing and give them no chance to present their idea. Sometimes by mean of power and position one can form particular group to defend his opinion and to press the opposition. This is a real temptation in synodal church.

Sometimes the lack of listening could proceed to internal fractions within the community. How do we deal with these? At this point I recall the ancient philosopher Zeno who used to say that it is no accident that we have been given two ears but only one mouth. We should listen more then we speak, because the Holy Spirit speaks through each human being, including the little one (1 Cor.1:27-29). In order to listen to God's Words, a synodal Church must listen to each other. This refers to the *sensus fidei* authority of the whole People of God, which is *infallible in credendo* (EG, no. 119).

3) Willingness to Share

Humility in listening must correspond to courage in speaking: everyone has the right to be heard, just as everyone has the right to speak. Listening means welcoming what others say as a way by which the Holy Spirit can speak for the good of all.⁴

Faith start and grow by sharing (Rm.10:14, 1Yh.1:3). There are many Catholics in the AoM who are unwilling to share their spiritual experiences and feeling hesitate to speak out their feelings or to tell others their reflections on ecclesial live. For many of them ecclesial live is just not their business but hierarchies' and

³ *Sintesis KAM, D.e.*

⁴ *Vademecum, 2.3*

catechists'.⁵ In general, the *synthesis of AoM* illustrates the lackness of catechesis-formation for the parishioners, and therefore the militancy of faith is also not strong enough. This can lead people to lose their confidence in expressing their faith and witnessing it in daily life; as *nemo dat quod non habet*.

The unwillingness to share could be also caused by such a feeling inferior; thinking that their opinion and experience are meaningless and therefore not worthy to be shared. In this case we should remember that *God uses the weak one to show his power (1.Cor.1:27)*; just as Mary express her experience: 'God has looked on the humble estate of his servant' (Lk.1:48). Each member within the Church should be openly and feeling free to express their feelings, to share their experiences, to speak out their needs and their thought in living out their faith. Accordingly, they should be given chances and opportunities to share their real-life of faith and spiritual experience. On this point we, the Church, needs to find proper ways to encourage all parishioners to share their experience on ecclesial life⁶. In doing so together we could reflect on what the Holy Spirit might be revealing through what we share with one another.

c. Pastoral Minister

The role of pastoral ministers is essential for a synodal Church, to take a particular responsibility for the people to live in communion, participation and mission. In the context of the AoM, more crucial is the competence of pastoral ministers to promote synodality to the whole part of diocese: parishes, stations and small communities.

1) Lay Pastoral Minister

Needless to say the important role of the lay pastoral ministers (*Pengurus Gereja*) in the AoM, especially in the stations and small-communities, where they take responsibility for most of pastoral duty. The AoM appreciates the presence and participation of many lay pastoral ministers in the diocese. Every Sunday many Catholics in the AoM (mostly in small communities and stations) celebrate no Mass but the celebration of the Word without any priest. In this situation the spiritual and ecclesial life of the people depends on their lay pastoral ministers who teach and guide them in ecclesial life, feeding and nourishing their spiritual life on the way toward salvation, Jesus Christ. The lay pastoral ministers take responsible to serve their people in all aspect of pastoral work; Liturgia, Koinonia, Kerygma, Diakonia, and Martyria. In fact, many of them lack of capacities for their pastoral duty, some even has no basic at all.⁷ Hence, one among many great challenges for the Church in the Aom is how the lay pastoral ministers be capable enough to take care of their people. How to prepare and provide them technically and spiritually for their services?

We are grateful to have a Pastoral Institute (STP) in the diocese, which is potential to educate young fellowship for pastoral ministers and could provide the AoM with numbers of good catechists. We need to continuously make an effort to empowering and to optimize its quality. The presence of good and qualified catechists will nurture synodality in the diocese.

2) Clergy and Religious Women and Men

The Archdiocese of Medan is blessed with numbers of religious women and men, including clergy. They have participated and contributed to the Church in many

⁵ *Sintesis KAM, B*

⁶ *Sintesis KAM, F.a*

⁷ *Sintesis KAM, D.a.*

ways, since the beginning of the Church in the diocese. The presence religious men and women has a special meaning for the Church, and the parishioners are being encourage to celebrate and to live out their faith. Through the consultation during the process of the synod, some parishioners explicitly express their great longing for priests, and religious men -women to visit them (*home-visit*), as happened decades ago but gradually diminished. They strongly believe that the presence of priests, consecrated life men and women would nourish their soul and strengthen their faith. Simultaneously it will inflame the spirit of synodality within the Church.⁸

d. Diversity

The essence of the Church is walking together. When we come to explore the meaning of the Church from the perspective of synodality, we will soon be aware that we are walking together not only with the Catholics only but also with other people. The preparation document declare that based on baptism we journey together with other Christians⁹ and based on humanity we walk together with all human beings of other religions¹⁰.

The synodal consultation process in the AoM indicates an assumption that a Catholic walking together with many other Catholics as a Church, the Body of Christ. Some parishioners assume that others, particularly who are not believe in Christ, are not the companions on the journey but rather as rivals and opponents. Admittedly, at a broader (national) level we often face a growing tension with other religion. We have FKUB (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*)¹¹ but some times we fail to walk together. Instead of building and nourishing dialogue we rather walking in other direction. Synodality challenges us to face and to address the situation with the spirit of companionship. To this point we need to realize that dialogue does not mean accepting everything from others, but rather walking together in our differences.

In addition, the Catholics in the diocese are multicultural with a very strong sense of cultural in most places, particularly in rural and suburban areas. On the one hand this could become an advantage for a synodal Church, as diversity could animate synodality and make it colorful. On the other hand, the strong cultural-tie can be challenging, particularly when people incline to prioritize cultural ceremonials rather than ecclesial life. In this case the Church needs a strong discernment, and wisely study a pastoral dialogue without falling into a *syncretism*. Accordingly, the Church has to be very careful with the practice of in-culturalization¹²

2. From Synodality to Creative Pastoral

Synodality leads us to a deeper understanding and a broader insight on the meaning of ecclesial life. The Church is the people of God walking together with all humanity, even with the whole reality. The Church in the Archdiocese of Medan is walking together not only with fellow Catholics or only with the Church-goers, not only with the hierarchy and consecrated live, but with all society and reality. All are our companions on the road that strengthening and empowering Church on its journey. Things can be drawn from this brief study of synodal process are some points needed to consider for a synodal Church

⁸ *Sintesis KAM*, D.a.

⁹ *Preparatory Document*, 28.

¹⁰ *Preparatory Document*, 29.

¹¹ FKUB (The Religious Harmony Forum) is a forum formed by the community and facilitated by the Government, in building, and maintaining harmony among religious communities.

¹² *Faith and Inculturation*, 26.

in the AoM. We may be able to communicate a creative pastoral in realizing a truly synodal Church in the diocese.

a. Synergetic-Fraternal

The Archdiocese of Medan is favored with many ecclesial potentials. Recall what was said above of the diocese which is well endowed with religious orders and congregations, male and female, each with its own spirituality and charism. Additionally, the Diocese is also supported by numerous foundations, institutions and variety of ministries units (engaged in education, health, social charity, etc.) managed both by religious congregations and the Diocese. All these are the assets of the church in carrying out its mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Synodality is characterized by mutual listening, where all are listening to each other to listen to God. Mutual listening within the Church demands a good communication between all its members (bishops, clerics, consecrated life, lay pastoral minister, parishioners) and all institutions or groups in the AoM (Presbyterial Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, diocesan commissions, parishes, small communities, religious orders/congregations, foundations, ministry units, and many other groups).

Walking Together indicates thinking and acting or moving Together as a team, bringing together all the strengths and capabilities for one common vision and mission. Synodality means living in Communion and in synergy. Each member is given various gifts of the Holy Spirit for the common good (1 Cor.12:7-11), thus, all members and parts of the Local Church are meant to help and complement each other. Accordingly, it becomes very important to have a sense of collegiality and collaboration; be it between the hierarchy (bishops-priests-deacons), between the Church leaders and the faithful, between the clergy and the laity, among all the faithful, and so on. In this way the synodality is also a calling to maximize participation of all members and segments within the Church and to optimize its quality in the entire diocese. This is why the synodal spirituality is essential for us, namely the 'spirituality of we' which enhances the contributions of each person.¹³

The International Theological Commission encourages everyone to deepen an understanding of the Church enlightened by a communion ecclesiology. It is helpful to establish and to develop a strong sense for synodality, forming a genuine community where everyone has a place in the Body of Christ, in order to embody a culture of encounter. All people are brothers and sisters, journeying together as one family, and the most significant issue is how we as brothers and sisters can collaborate and working together as one body of Christ. Our local churches will need to re-conceive synodality and walking together against the temptations of pastoral narcissism, selfishness, identity confinement, isolation and rejection.¹⁴

It is worth noting that the religious communities (There are plenty in the diocese) are accustomed to a synodal life. It is common for each community to discuss together everything related to their daily life, such as community life, pastoral work, etc. In this sense they are internally very good, but they are sometimes weaker in terms of communion with the entire Church.

The presbyteries have a particular place in animating the dynamical spirit of the Synod. Admittedly, the hierarchy walking together with the parishioners sometimes at the front, sometimes in the middle, and other times at the back. Pope Francis on his address to the faithful of the diocese of Rome, 18 September 2021, affirms that a good

¹³ *Document For The Continental Stage (DCS)*, 85.

¹⁴ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in The Life and Mission of the Church*, Vatican, 2017.

shepherd must walk in this way; he walks in front to guide, in the middle to encourage and to feel the needs and the concerns of his flock, and behind because each believer also has an 'instinct' to find a new way forward or to find a lost path on his own. In fact, it happens that a pastor has no time (lack of time) to animate his parishioners, families, categorical groups, etc.

We are delighted for the Presbyterium Council (DIKAM) to assist the bishop in organizing the Diocese, and a Pastoral Council (DEPASKAM) to contribute qualified resources or support to the pastoral approach promoted by the bishop. This is an opportunity and an encouraging doorway for lay people to participate (as a consultant) in pastoral planning. But again, the challenge is how do they collaborate as a one Body of Christ? '... the implementation in the local Church and on every level of the circular relationship between the ministry of Pastors, the participation and co-responsibility of lay people, the stimulus coming from **the charismatic gifts** according to the dynamic circular link between *one, some* and *all*'.¹⁵ The Church in the Archdiocese of Medan will be more radiant in proclaiming the Kingdom of God and being a militant witness of Jesus Christ in the midst of society and the whole world, if all its members and all groups and communities in the diocese are '*being*' and '*doing*' synergistically.

b. Involvement

In walking together, everyone has a role, just as each part of the body has a specific role in the body. Everyone has and should be given space to engage in the Church according to their vocations. As everyone has to be involved on the journey, then all have to listen to each other along the way. Synodality is reciprocal listening, means listening to each other in order to listen to God. No one is perfect, but we need each other and learn from each other. Therefore, synodality demands humility and humbleness as human beings. The Church walking together in complementarity not to put each other down but listening to each other with patience and humbleness and sharing strength.

Every parishioner must be involved and being aware of matters relating to the ecclesial life, the life of the Church; not limited to the spiritual aspects and doctrine, but also concerning the mundane elements such as information-news of the diocese/parish, its programs, activities, including its transparency of finances. As a consequence, every Catholic spiritually must be well informed about the Catholic faith and its teaching, then also well-formed in living out the faith. In this regard, catechesis and accompaniment on the journey together are very important. All Catholics also need to have access to all information about the Church, regulations, pastoral programs and activities, and whatever happens regarding ecclesial life in their local Church, including the transparency of the Parish's finances. By doing so, it is hoped that the parishioners will become habituated and accustomed to thinking about and being responsible for the Church.

The synodal process challenges and invites the Church to review its way of being (*modus vivendi*) and working (*modus operandi*). A synodal Church walks and moves together in the same road toward the same direction: not against each other, or as rivals to the other, each in its own way according to its own vision. Or the bishop on the one side and the priest on the other, or the church leaders against the simple members. The synodal church means being together and with each other.

¹⁵ *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, 106.

c. *Affective Pastoral*

Synodality underlines the unity of the Church as the family of God, where all are brothers and sisters. The living church family relationship should be in touch with the humanity of each member. In this sense, it is very important to realize that the synodal church is not simply hearing, but listening. Listen requires the involvement of the whole being and heart, so as to grasp something from what is heard, both cognitive and affective. Listening assumes a vibrant interaction, where one is fully aware of the presence of the other as a subject and not as a mere object; by which one experiences the encounter as a process, a journey.

From the perspective of synodality listening means a quality listening, where one listening to others not only to respect, but firstly to know, to discover, to learn and to feel others. In doing so one could recognize and feel God's presence, and further could realize and listen to what God's saying with it. The synodal church as a sacrament becomes the visible sign of the presence of Christ, in which therefore, people can truly find Him and feel His presence. Meanwhile, one can feel the presence of Christ only in a living communion, where people are united to one another as a family and connected to each other because of love. Hence, the interaction in synodality is an interaction driven by a sense of kinship, and animated by a profound sense of humanity. Synodality teaches us the art of touching humanity. Based on this, a Church that engages in administrative matters only is losing its very essence and could even be turning itself into an 'office church'.

The church is based on the teaching of dogmas and the fundamental principles of faith. Of course, these essential things are indisputable and not negotiable. However, the Church needs to remain vigilant and sensible so that in fulfilling and proclaiming its faith, it will not be trapped in rigidity. Such rigidity could end up disregarding the principal mission of the Church, which is the salvation that leads and brings all people to the spiritual union with Christ. If the Church in the Archdiocese of Medan to be truly synodal, we, the Church, should always learn the art of touching and promoting humanity without ignoring the core of our faith. We need to encourage an evangelization that strongly anchored on the fundamental principles and teaching of the Church but also have a strong sense for the human realities. In addition, we also need to ensure that the Church is not stuck with a series of activities and programs, but focused more on its pastoral ministry in order to bring Christ to all people and to invite all people to participate.

d. *Formative Pastoral*

The Catholic Church has existed in Medan Archdiocese for more than 100 years. The Second Vatican Council coined and affirmed that the church is *semper reformanda*. The Church in the AoM always needs to renew itself. The Synod on Synodality is like an eye opener that widens our eyes to see the important of a proper formation on synodality. Formation on synodality should be global and holistic, otherwise it will not be synodal. All members of the Church at every level; clergy and non-clergy, monks, religious men and women, seminarians, families, institutions and all people, must constantly learn how to be a synodal Catholics according to their respective roles. This is what we called the Synodal Formation, a lifetime learning. After all, synodality is not primarily an event but rather a process of 'learning by doing'.

More specifically, all Catholics at every level will need guidance and catechesis to properly understand what the synodality is all about. As such, hopefully the parishioners will gradually get accustomed to and eventually put into practice the synodal style of leadership. For example, to mention one among many, listening to communal

discernment before making any decision. The Synodal Church needs pastors trained in synodality, who exercise a synodal style of leadership, a leadership of service and not of power, a shepherd and not a top-down leader. A synodal church also longing for priests trained in collegiality and collaboration. In this regard, synodality is a call for global formation. It is a call for a better collaboration towards building fraternal communion and empowering the laity, means helping them not to think or to feel inferior. For this purpose, the formation of the laity must be done in such a way that they actively participate in the Church based on their baptism (*trimunera Christi*), to love God and to serve the Church and others.

To recall what was said above, in many stations and small communities the Lay Pastoral Minister plays a central role to lead and to guide the faithful. We are so grateful to have many lay pastoral ministers in the Archdiocese, but many of them are untrained and lack of capacity. The Church therefore urgently needs to provide them a special formation and tiered-training-program. Most of the lay pastoral ministers are ordinary people, often with insufficient understanding and knowledge on ecclesial matters as well as its teaching.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter on the Establishment of the Ministry of Catechists, calls for the importance of formation process for the ministers, in Scripture, Theology, Pastoral Care and Pedagogy, in order to become a faithful co-worker of the priests in evangelization.¹⁶ A serious preparation is necessary to enhance the ability and the confidence of the ministers of the Word.¹⁷ The synodal formation has to be continuous, because synodality itself is *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi* of the Church. We seek always to deepen our communion with one another by listening to each other, respecting and caring for one another. Therefore, catechesis is a regularly-continuous necessity for implementing and nurturing a sense of synodality.

CONCLUSION

The synod on synodality is a call for a pastoral of conversion for a richer and more dynamic Church. It is a homework for the whole Church, all its members: clerics, consecrated men and women, and lay people and all part or group: parishes, stations, small communities, categorical groups, institutions, foundations and all units of services. The pastoral conversion requires a change of behavior and mentality, as the synodal process implies personal and communal conversion. It needs the renunciation of egos in favor of the *spirituality of we*, of a communion instead of working alone.

The AoM elaborate such the rich synodal inspirations in to Pastoral Focus within three years 2023: *Umat Katolik yang Bersekutu* (Catholics in communion), 2024: *Umat Katolik yang Berpartisipasi* (Participating Catholics), dan 2025: *Umat Katolik yang Bermisi* (Catholics on mission). We have a great hope that these three focuses will become means of walking together as people of God. Everybody is called to get involved actively, starting from those who are not being heard or feeling not being heard and that the Church pays little attention to. In a synodal Church nobody acts as a spectator or a passenger or letting oneself being eliminated from the communion of the Church, all are embraced. In this way we can experience a refreshing newness of pastoral ministries, which is synergistic, affective and transformative. This enables us to fulfill the missions of the synodal Church.

¹⁶ *Antiquum Ministerium* 8,9.

¹⁷ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 72

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