

Actions of the Spirit

Openness in our Ideas

Pope Francis

The following are excerpts from a video message by Pope Francis to the recent plenary session of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America in May 2022 on the theme, "Synodality and Communion".

A correct interpretation of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council implies a relearning of how to walk together in facing the pastoral and societal challenges which are characteristic of this changing era.

Typically, we seem to encounter the Holy Spirit by chance when our ideas are still open to further development. However, this does not happen if our thinking has become fixed and closed.

When a person believes they know everything, the gift of the Spirit cannot be received. When we think we know all there is to know, that gift cannot enlighten us because it cannot enter our heart. In other words, there is nothing more dangerous for synodality than to think that we have already understood everything and have everything under control. The gift of the Spirit is a surprising and unforeseen one which will always transcend our thinking. This gift is also always freely given and asks for nothing in return. There is no process by which we can obtain this gift. It is undeserved and no one can possess or control it. The gift is the Holy Spirit, who does not impose Himself by force but gently summons our affection and our freedom, who patiently and tenderly shapes us to acquire the form of unity and communion that He desires in our relationships. [...]

The Holy Spirit is not a force which belongs to the past. Rather, Pentecost is occurring in our own time: the Spirit is 'Great Unknown,' who has no image, is always contemporary and never ceases to accompany and console us. It is he who creates the diversity of charisms. It is he who creates a certain disorder at first. It is enough for us to recall the morning of Pentecost, of the confusion that was created – so much so that those listening to the Apostles thought that they were drunk. The Spirit creates an initial disorder so as to then create harmony out of all these differences. *Ipse est armonia*, says Saint Basil, "He is harmony.". But first he creates disharmony for you, with charisms that are all diverse. [...]

Synodality is the dynamic dimension, the historical dimension of ecclesial communion founded on Trinitarian communion, which – while simultaneously cherishing the *sensus fidei* of all God's holy people, apostolic collegiality and unity with the successor of Peter – must animate the conversion and reform of the Church at every level.

¹ Cf. *Soñemos juntos. El camino a un futuro mejor*, Simon & Schuster, New York 2020, pp. 57-58.

²Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution), n. 12.