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APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
“LET US DREAM”
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Introduction

Your Eminence, My Brother Archbishops, Bishops, Dear Friends in Christ,

As the Apostolic Nuncio, I greet you in the name of the Holy Father, assuring you of his prayers and closeness as you gather for this assembly of the Catholic Extension Mission Bishops Conference, addressing the theme, “Let Us Dream.” I thank His Eminence Cardinal Cupich, the Chancellor; Bishop Kicanas, the Vice Chancellor, and Father John Wall, President of Catholic Extension, for their kind invitation.

The theme is timely, following the Pope’s book, or, really, his interview with Austin Ivereigh, which bears the same title. I am sure that you, like the Church throughout the United States, after the devastation and havoc caused by the pandemic, are eager to offer to the People of God in your respective Dioceses a word of hope, a hope that comes from the joy of the Gospel.

Catholic Extension exists to work in solidarity with people in America’s poorest regions to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities; it exists to evangelize and to help fulfill Pope Francis’s dream for a missionary Church.

At the beginning of his Pontificate that Pope Francis described his dream for the Church, writing:

“I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.” (POPE FRANCIS, APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*, 24 NOVEMBER 2013, 27)

How can we as a Church better evangelize the People of God, especially among those who are poor, deprived of basic resources, and whose faith communities struggle to survive? I am not speaking merely of a material poverty but also of the spiritual poverty.

Pope Francis reminds us that “the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care.” (*EG*, 200)

The Holy Father repeatedly says *No* to economies of exclusion, while also calling each of us to solidarity and deeper fraternity. The poor are not merely an object of our charity; rather, they are our brothers and sisters, with whom we journey together in faith. It is this sense of “journeying together”

upon which I hope to reflect, particularly in light of the forthcoming synod on synodality. Our collective journeying together is vital for the mission of evangelization.

The Church as the Family of God

In *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council describes the Church, using scriptural imagery (cf. LG, 5), as the “sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ”; a “cultivated field, the tillage of God”; and, “the Jerusalem, which is above” and “our mother.” Other scriptural images utilized by the document include the Church as the Body of Christ, with its Head and members (cf. 1 Cor 12:12), who have differing gifts, given by the Spirit for the building up of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12:1-11).

One scriptural image used by the Council that may be helpful for us is the Church as the Family of God, “the house of God in which His family dwells; the household of God in the Spirit” (cf. Eph. 2:19, 22). The family is a place of belonging, a privileged place to experience love and growth, an original sign, given by God the Father. It is both a building block of society and a critical means by which we are introduced into a decisive relationship with God. The family exists to help generate life and to deepen companionship between individuals as they journey toward their common destiny.

Every family has a mission to build up the Church and to increase the Kingdom of God in the world; to be a community of love in which people experience a sense of belonging; and, to be a beacon of light and hope to others. For Catholic Extension the locus of the mission happens to be among the poor.

In the Family of God, we continually meet and encounter the Event or Person who “gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” (cf. BENEDICT XVI, ENCYCLICAL LETTER *DEUS CARITAS EST*, 25 DECEMBER 2005, 1) In the family, we behold the Mystery of Christ present as a face. One learns to confront one’s difficulties and to face the realities of life, enlightened by His Presence; there we encounter Christ in the other. In your Dioceses, in the parishes and missions, the people’s sense of companionship coalesces or comes together in a space, in daily living and working together, on a common journey with a common goal: a destiny with God.

Christ Himself grew up in a family under the loving gaze of the Blessed Virgin and under the protective care of Saint Joseph. The Church may be understood as the Family of God, but it is a family with diverse members that does not lose its identity and which has its very roots in Truth itself. Jesus addresses God as Father and refers frequently to the disciples as His friends.

The early Church addressed its members as *adelphoi* or brothers and sisters. The community of believers is not principally an administrative grouping, the way a company is organized, and occasionally re-organized; rather, the distinctive characteristics of the Church as the Family of God are prayer and Eucharistic worship.

Believers, including the poorest members of society, have been drawn together and constituted as a family by the Holy Spirit. Many of the poor are like the widow who placed two small coins in the treasury but who contributed more than all the rest (cf. Mk 12:41-44). As you know, no family is perfect, and there are always family members with different temperaments and sometimes different economic means, but there is one fundamental bond: faith.

The Church as an Evangelizing Community

The Church, constituted by God as His family, is commissioned to evangelize. The Church is not just a social service organization. We offer the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our salvation. How can we best be an evangelizing community? What are characteristics of evangelizing communities? Here, I want to return to the essential elements of what I proposed at the Fifth National Encuentro three years ago.

First, *we need to be a Church that goes forth*. We are missionaries. Going forth demands courageously leaving our comfort zone. In 2013, Pope Francis said:

“Instead of just being a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage.” (POPE FRANCIS, *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*, 24 NOVEMBER 2013, 24)

The fear and economic hardship brought about the pandemic, coupled with skyrocketing inflation, can have the effect of leading the poor into a spiral of despair. They may feel more like quitting than continuing the journey. How can we best bear Christ’s Presence to them?

Second, *the community of missionary disciples shows initiative*. The Spanish word *primerear* captures this idea of being proactive. As bishops, I invite you to honestly assess whether you seize the initiative. Are you proactive or reactive? Would you describe yourself as a “spiritual entrepreneur”?

The Holy Father writes:

“An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first, and therefore, we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.” (*IBID.*)

Third, *the evangelizing community is engaged with its members*. Pope Francis uses the word *balconear*, which means to stand on the balcony to see what is happening without personal engagement; to see and criticize without ever personally getting involved. The Pope proposes Jesus as the opposite of this sort of person:

“Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples, ‘You will be blessed if you do this.’ An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances. It is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.” (*IBID.*)

As the Chief Shepherd of your local church, you have the opportunity to engage others to get involved rather than remain indifferent by identifying and utilizing their gifts. Moreover, “to get” involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives” means to demonstrate solidarity. In this regard, do we lead by example?

Fourth, *a community of missionary disciples accompanies others*. Speaking to bishops in Assisi in 2013, Pope Francis said:

I repeat it often: walking with our people, sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle, and sometimes behind: in front in order to guide the community, in the middle in order to encourage and support; and at the back in order to keep it united and so that no one lags too far behind, to keep them united. (POPE FRANCIS, "MEETING WITH CLERGY, CONSECRATED PEOPLE, AND MEMBERS OF DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCILS," CATHEDRAL OF SAN RUFFINO, ASSISI, 4 OCTOBER 2013.)

Accompaniment entails guiding, encouraging and supporting, and uniting along the journey.

Fifth, *the evangelizing community is fruitful*. Commenting on the parable of the weeds and wheat, the Holy Father says:

"An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient with the weeds. The sower when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear." (EG, 4)

Fruitfulness demands discernment and patience, which allow us to journey forward. I will return to this idea of discernment at the conclusion of my talk.

A final characteristic of an evangelizing community is joy. The Eucharist is the sacrament of Christian joy. In the Eucharist, the joy that Jesus has won is not only preserved and shared, but perdures. The Church celebrates the Eucharist with the spousal joy of one promised to Christ. It is a foretaste of the banquet in which those invited will share in the heavenly banquet of the kingdom in its fullness.

The poor are excluded from many things in this world, including the opportunity to have a decent education; from employment; from proper housing, and the like. However, they should never be excluded from the merciful embrace of the Father that comes to us in Christ Jesus.

Contemplate the words of the hymn *Panis angelicus: Panis Angelicus fit panis hominum/ Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum/ O res mirabilis! Manducat Dominum pauper, servus et humilis*.

Nourished by the Holy Eucharist, you and your people will have the courage to go forth, to seize the initiative, to be engaged, and to accompany others so that they might bear fruit that will last. They will be evangelizing communities, marked by the joy that comes from the Gospel and the Eucharist.

A Synodal Church: A Church that Walks together and that listens

Returning to the idea of synodality, the Holy Father wants a synodal Church to help support the mission of evangelization. Growing up, almost every one of us took a family trip or journey – with hopes for renewal, filled with many joys, along with a few mishaps. As you journey into the future with your flocks, you journey together. The Greek word *synodos* means "to be on the journey together" as in a caravan or religious pilgrimage (Lk 2:41-44). Synodality describes the journeying together in history of the People of God toward the New and Eternal Jerusalem.

We are a "pilgrim Church," journeying toward the heavenly Jerusalem. Significantly, in *Lumen Gentium* (LG 9-17), the Second Vatican Council treated the "People of God" before treating the hierarchy. If a pyramidal view of the Church, with the bishops and priests on top and the laity on the bottom, had

dominated previously, now all the baptized, with their distinctive roles, including religious, could understand their vocations as a service to the Church. But decades removed from the Council, this new way of thinking still needs to become more widespread in the minds of the clergy and the faithful.

Synodality is a way of living the faith in a permanent way at every level: in your dioceses, parishes, the family, and at the peripheries. All Church members, not just the clergy or experts, are to be engaged in this way of living. Cardinal Mario Grech adds that “synodality is not only a *methodos* but an *odos*, not only a method but a way towards a re-thinking of the Church’s role in contemporary society.” (CARDINAL MARIO GRECH, “TOWARDS A SYNODAL IRISH CHURCH. ADDRESS TO THE BISHOPS OF IRELAND, 3 FEBRUARY 2021)

Pope Francis spoke of this in 2015, stating that it is “precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” (ADDRESS DURING THE CEREMONY COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, OCTOBER 17, 2015) Echoing Pope Benedict XVI that synodality was a “constitutive element of the Church,” he described it as “nothing other than the ‘journeying together’ of God’s flock along the paths of history towards the encounter with Christ the Lord.”

A synodal church is one that listens and “which realizes that listening is more than simply hearing.” This involves listening not only to each other, but also to the Spirit to know what “he says to the churches.” (Rev 2:7) Austin Ivereigh notes that a distinctive element of the Pope’s vision of synodality is pneumatological, writing, “For Bergoglio, there is no synodality without not just the presence but also the *action* of the Holy Spirit.” (AUSTIN IVEREIGH, “HEARING THE SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE: POPE FRANCIS’S VISION OF SYNODALITY,” *STUDIUM* (N. 3), 2021, 359)

The first work of the Holy Spirit is conversion. This is why in *Let Us Dream*, the Pope says:

“What characterizes a synodal path is the role of the Holy Spirit. We listen, we discuss in groups, but, above all, we pay attention to what the Spirit has to say to us. That is why I ask everyone to speak frankly and to listen carefully to others, because there, too, the Spirit is speaking. Open to changes and new possibilities, the Synod is for everyone an experience of conversion.” (POPE FRANCIS, *LET US DREAM*, NEW YORK: SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 85)

Listening affirms each person’s dignity and expresses respect for the voices, legitimate desires, problems and sufferings of the People of God. The process of listening begins with the People of God, who, in virtue of their baptism, share in the prophetic office of Christ. Priests and bishops, attentive to the voice of the flock, listen to God to act rightly and to give credible witness to the apostolic faith. Consecrated persons are also uniquely positioned to illuminate the transcendent and eschatological dimensions of the pastoral issues that arise in our changed cultural context. The process converges to a point of unity (not uniformity) in faith, facilitating an encounter with the Lord in Truth.

Recently, Cardinal Mario Grech addressed those living a monastic or contemplative vocation, writing:

“The invitation to listen permeates your entire life, from your listening to the Word of God in the Sacred Scriptures, all the way to your listening to your brothers and sisters in community as well as to the men and women of our time. To listen, precisely because it is more than physical hearing, is to learn. Your life is a gymnasium in which diligent listening to the Scriptures, ‘as a baby sucks milk from his mother’s breast’ (Ephrem the

Syrian), educates one in a profound listening to oneself, others and God.” (LETTER OF CARDINAL MARIO GRECH TO THE MONASTERIES, 28 AUGUST 2021)

As we listen to God and to one another, we learn. The Church needs this attentive listening now more than ever if she is to overcome the polarization that is afflicting this nation and its people, as well as ecclesial institutions. As long as infighting continues, the mission will suffer. Thus, the Holy Father says:

“We need respectful, mutual listening, free of ideology and predetermined agendas. The aim is not to reach agreement by means of a contest between opposing positions, but to journey together to seek God’s will, allowing differences to harmonize. Most important is the synodal spirit: to meet each other with respect and trust, to believe in our shared unity, and to receive the new thing that the Spirit wishes to reveal to us.” (POPE FRANCIS, *LET US DREAM*, 93)

Synodality: The Journeying of God toward humanity

I began with the idea of the Church as the Family of God. It is the whole Family of God that is called to evangelize and to walk together. How can we theologically understand the Church as a Family of God that journeys together? We begin almost every prayer with the sign of the cross, invoking the Trinity. There is a clear Trinitarian imprint on the understanding of the Church in the documents of Vatican II, which describes the Church, as “a people made one with the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” (*LG*, nn. 2-4)

One speaks of a “Trinitarian synodality” *ad intra*, referring to the dynamic relationship of the Persons of the Trinity as a communion of love, and a “Trinitarian synodality” *ad extra*, in which the persons of the Godhead “journey together” toward all of creation, the Church, and humanity in history. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the model for all forms of synodal living, and, therefore, are a model of living *as* the Church.

The Scriptures allude to this in the Divine “We” in the story of creation (Gen 1:26), in the visit of the three guests to Abraham (Gen 18:1-5), and in the journey of God toward His people through the covenants of the Old Testament, culminating in the Messiah. The New Testament, especially the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38), recounts the Incarnation as a Trinitarian action – a journeying together: the Father sends the Spirit to overshadow the Virgin so that the Eternal Word of the Father might become incarnate. In the Trinity, there is communion and reciprocity among the Persons *and* an outpouring of love toward humanity.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit journey together in harmony. The Triune God journeys together toward all of humanity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit journey with us as we as a Church discern the way forward, open to what the Spirit says and guided by the living Word (cf. Ps 119:105).

Synodality is a way of living the faith in a permanent way at every level in the life of the Church and is rooted in the Paschal Mystery, beginning with baptism, through which individuals share in the communion of the Trinity. Baptism involves the human response to the call to live in union with Christ through the Spirit. (1 Cor 1:9) This communion purifies the person from sin, makes him or her a new creation, an adopted child of God, and member of the Church, opening the door to the other sacraments, including the Eucharist.

It is the Church which makes the Eucharist, just as the Eucharist makes the Church. In virtue of the Eucharist, the People of God as the Body of Christ journeys together, with diverse members (1 Cor 10:17), under the headship of Christ. Christ, the Good Shepherd, leads the flock on its journey. He not only leads, but He also feeds the flock.

In the reception of Holy Communion, communion with God is deepened vertically and horizontally. God's own *agape* is received bodily, so that His saving work may continue in and through the Church. Conscious of the gift, the Church goes forth to draw all of humanity together in unity. This is why the Eucharist can never become an "object" to be used as a political weapon; rather, it is the Sacrament of God's Love. The People of God must remain intimately connected to Christ in the Eucharist, which demand, on our part, prioritizing Sunday Mass and access to the Eucharist. Without it, it will be difficult for our people to remain strong along the journey together and to carry out what the mission of the Church demands.

Synodality: Walking together in the Spirit and with the Blessed Virgin

The mission, of course, is Spirit-driven. Jesus' public mission began with His baptism, when the voice of the Father was heard and the Spirit descended over Him like a dove. This same Spirit, which was poured out on the Apostles at Pentecost, has been poured into our hearts in baptism, and there was true outpouring of the Spirit and power at our ordinations.

This outpouring of the Spirit was not given only to the ordained. The Holy Spirit introduces order (1 Cor 14:31) amid the diversity of members and charisms in the Body of Christ, so that members work together for the good of the whole Church. Each member is given some manifestation of the Spirit in view of the good of the body (cf. 1 Cor 12:37). The gifts of the Spirit are gathered in the Church, where members serve and listen to one reciprocally.

The first work of the Spirit is conversion. Cardinal Grech reminds us that:

"a true synodal journey cannot disregard our willingness to be converted by our listening to the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit present in our lives. ... the invitation to conversion is at the heart of the proclamation made by Jesus... for the synodal process our Holy Father has suggested to the universal Church, you are 'experts' of this dignity of conversion in its positive aspects as well as in its difficulties, difficulties that should not discourage but rather should be lived in a true spirit of faith and hope." (LETTER OF CARDINAL MARIO GRECH TO THE MONASTERIES, 28 AUGUST 2021)

Living in this spirit of faith and hope, we are transformed as disciples. Although we are shepherds, we always remain disciples, and the model for our discipleship is the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit, who is at the core of this ecclesial "walking together", overshadowed Mary, who lived this journey in a privileged way.

Although the Spirit was operating from the dawn of creation, in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), a qualitative leap was made in salvation history. By the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived the Word of God, who in turn was given as a gift to humanity. Mary and the Spirit "journey together" from the Annunciation through Pentecost.

If in the economy of salvation, the Holy Spirit represents the condition of possibility for the self-communication of God in Jesus on the part of the Divine, Mary, with her *fiat*, represents the condition of possibility of this communication on the part of humanity. Through her attentive listening and openness to God, she fulfilled her mission in bringing Christ to the world. She demonstrates the characteristics of living this journey.

She journeyed with and in the Trinity, willingly receiving the love of the Father, bearing the Son within her womb, and becoming a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Mother of God is an icon of synodal life, reminding us of the universal call to listen attentively to God.

What happens when we listen attentively to God, particularly when there is a disagreement or a seeming impasse? Usually, there is a breakthrough or what the Holy Father calls an “overflow” – an overflow of the Spirit which “breaks the banks that confined our thinking, and causes to pour forth, as if from an overflowing fountain, the answers that formerly the contraposition did not allow us to see.” (POPE FRANCIS, *LET US DREAM*, 80)

Synodality: Discernment

Often, it seems that our own lack of vision is an impediment to evangelization. We want to be in control rather than to surrender to the Spirit. The struggle for power and factionalism which plagues the Church and society prevents us from seeing clearly the path forward. The road that lies ahead for the Church in the United States is not an easy one. Damaged by the scandals, secularization, polarization, and the politicization of the Faith, at times, we are left to wonder whether we can overcome all the obstacles and be effective in our mission.

In *the Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis invited every particular church to enter into a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform so that the missionary impulse of the Church might be more focused, generous, and fruitful, adding that the important thing is “to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.” (*EG*, 30; 33)

But as bishops, you have a special task to reflect on how to move forward. It is what Austin Ivereigh calls ‘apostolic discernment in common’, which he describes as a “process of searching for the will of God in which the apostolic group becomes the subject of an act of discernment.” (A. Ivereigh, *Studium*, 365) It is apostolic inasmuch as that the process of discernment is geared toward the service of the people, especially the poor, through the proclamation of the Gospel. Three phrases that help us understand discernment are: *to recognize; to interpret; and to choose*.

To recognize. Individuals, parishes, and dioceses must be able to confront situations and difficulties in life; they need to be able to recognize and name these difficulties. At the same time, they also must possess a sense of self-awareness. Many people today are well-educated in the sciences and have a very refined background, but are illiterate when it comes to affectivity and spirituality.

Hence, there is a serious need to form people and communities in recognizing the interior movements of the Spirit and to have an honest assessment of one’s own identity. There must be a recognition of those movements of the Spirit which bring joy and which last, and those that do not. As Monsignor Luigi Giussani frequently said, “reality has never betrayed me.” We must be realistic about the present conditions in which we must carry out our mission. *To recognize*.

To interpret. Here individuals, parishes, and dioceses must not only recognize challenges, but also learn to interpret experiences, especially in light of faith. As individuals and communities attempt to understand the *meaning* of that which they are experiencing and how to evaluate experiences, the hierarchy of truths of the Catholic Faith can assist in the discernment process.

Pope Francis calls all of us to discern: “Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.” (EG, 20)

The process of discernment and deliberation is critical. Bishops and priests will need to weigh the pros and cons, using faith and reason, when making proposals or decisions about how best to evangelize. As co-workers of the bishop, priests, and especially pastors, offer their theological, spiritual and pastoral insights, possessing the experience of shepherding and accompanying the flock, standing as Christ in their midst.

Laity, across the spectrum, are called to fulfill the responsibilities of their baptism, to work for the sanctification of the world, and to take part in the evangelizing mission of the Church, offering insights from their professional, personal and spiritual experiences.

Nevertheless, we must interpret things honestly. For example, in commenting on the Synod on the Amazon, the Holy Father said that many people rightly recognized the lack of priests and, as a result, the deprivation of the faithful of the sacraments. Of course, many immediately jumped to a solution: married priests, *viri probati*. As time passed during the Synod, another reality surfaced: the lack of missionary zeal among priests, who often preferred to be sent to America and Europe where life was more comfortable. The lack of access to sacraments was not merely a result of low numbers of clergy but “the lack of solidarity and missionary zeal in the hearts of many of our priests.” (POPE FRANCIS, *LET US DREAM*, 90)

Discernment requires not just looking at data or recognizing a reality but rightly interpreting it through the gift of the Spirit, who also reveals “blockages that are preventing us from taking advantage of the grace of God that is already being offered to us.” (IBID.) *To interpret*.

To choose. Discernment demands being able to choose. Mindful of their duty to listen to the flock, pastors must have the “smell of the sheep.” Locally, as bishops, you ultimately have a personal and specific responsibility to witness to the truth and to preserve the unity and integrity of the faith and the flock. After careful discernment, flowing from the unanimity of the consent emanating from the deliberations, you will have to make decisions, but only after input from the people and clergy and after prayerful discernment yourselves.

This consent – this choosing – is never an assertion of power but remains a service to the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus. Ultimately, discernment is of a communitarian nature and an expression of the co-responsibility that believers have; it demands that its members have an ecclesial conscience leading to communion. The keyword is “co-responsibility.”

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI said:

It is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This

demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly be recognized as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. (BENEDICT XVI, “DISCORSO ALL’APERTURA DEL CONVEGNO PASTORALE DELLA DIOCESI DI ROMA SUL TEMA: ‘APPARTENENZA ECCLESIALE E CORRESPONSIBILITÀ PASTORALE,’” MAY 26, 2009)

This choosing also demands patience, which “does not come easily to our impatient age.” The Holy Father encourages us:

“Discerning in the midst of conflict requires us sometimes to pitch camp together, waiting for the skies to clear. Time belongs to the Lord. Trusting in Him, we move forward with courage, building unity through discernment, to discover and implement God’s dream for us, and the paths of action ahead.” (POPE FRANCIS, *LET US DREAM*, 94)