# TOWARDS A SYNODAL CHURCH: PATHWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

## ECUMENISM

Catholic doctrine understands that all who are baptised are incorporated into the one mystical body of Christ. Thus, despite the wounds of history, all the baptised are the people of God, the church. Vatican II teaches that elements of sanctification and truth have been preserved in varying degrees by other Christian communities. We must be open to receiving these gifts. Synodality and ecumenism have the same starting point, baptism, the same logic of gift exchange, and the same practices of listening, dialogue, and convergence.

"All Christians participate in the sensus fidei through baptism. Therefore, as well as constituting the basis of synodality, baptism is also the foundation of ecumenism. … Ecumenism is, first and foremost, a matter of spiritual renewal. It demands processes of repentance and the healing of memories of past wounds and, where necessary, finding the courage to offer fraternal correction in a spirit of evangelical charity." (FD 23)

"Dialogue, encounter, and exchange of gifts, typical of a synodal Church, are calls to open out to relations with other religious traditions so as 'to establish friendship, peace and harmony and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love.'" (FD 41)

"The exchange of gifts is of crucial significance in the journey towards full and visible unity among all churches and Christian communions. … Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way, it is always an 'exchange of gifts.'" (FD 122)

"Ecumenical dialogue is fundamental to developing an understanding of synodality and the unity of the Church. It urges us to develop ecumenical synodal practices, including forms of consultation and discernment on questions of shared and urgent interest." (FD 138)

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

**Conversations in the Spirit, questions for reflection:**

- In what ways does our baptismal identity as ambassadors of Christ, entrusted with God's ministry of reconciliation, shape how we encounter, listen to, and respond to Christians of other traditions—especially when differences or misunderstandings arise?
- What "wounds" from history or current divisions have you encountered in relations with other Christians, and how might processes of repentance and healing begin in our community?
- What gifts from other Christian traditions—such as their spiritualities, theologies, or social commitments (para. 122)—have enriched your faith, and how can we receive them with gratitude?
- What concrete actions can you propose to make ecumenism a lived reality in your parish and community?