

TOWARDS A SYNODAL CHURCH: PATHWAYS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Decision-making does not conclude the discernment process. It must be accompanied and followed by practices of accountability and evaluation undertaken in a spirit of transparency inspired by evangelical criteria. (FD 95)

In particular, it has been requested that greater light be shed on the meaning of transparency. The synodal process has connected it to words such as truth, loyalty, clarity, honesty, integrity, consistency, rejection of obscurity, hypocrisy and ambiguity, and absence of ulterior motives. (FD 96)

The attitude to transparency we have just outlined safeguards the trust and credibility needed by a synodal Church that is attentive to relationships. When this trust is violated, the weakest and the most vulnerable suffer the most. Wherever the Church enjoys trust, the practice of transparency, accountability, and evaluation helps to strengthen its credibility. These practices are even more critical where the Church's credibility needs rebuilding. They are particularly important in regard to the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults. (FD 97)

These practices contribute to keeping the Church faithful to its mission. The absence of these practices is one of the consequences of clericalism, which is thus fuelled. Clericalism is based on the implicit assumption that those who have authority in the Church are not to be held to account for their actions and decisions as if they were isolated from or above the rest of the People of God. (FD 98)

Scripture:

Luke 12:2-3: Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops.

Reflection Questions:

- How do we foster trusting relationships within our parishes and with the wider community? (See FD paragraph 96 above: "truth, loyalty...")
- How are we called to encourage attitudes of transparency and accountability in our ministries and daily operations?
- In what ways do we evaluate and hold ourselves accountable in our decision-making?
- What conversations surrounding transparency and confidentiality have taken place, or need to be take place?