

# Pope Francis' Memorable Recent Trip to Canada

## 2) Pope Francis Talks About His Own View Of Synodality With Some Fellow Jesuits



*Pope Francis in his conversation with Canada's Jesuits during his recent visit to that country explained the power of synodality and reiterated that the synod is not a political meeting but an expression of the Church*

*where the protagonist is the Holy Spirit. The pope met with his Jesuit confreres in Canada for a private conversation at the Archbishop's Residence in Québec City on the last day of his July 24 - 30 trip to Canada.*

*The pope normally reserves a private moment to meet with local Jesuits during his apostolic journeys and typically responds to questions in an informal conversation with those gathered. Responding to a question about "your synodal vision of the Church", the pope replied:*

Look, it bothers me that the adjective "synodal" is used as if it were the latest quick fix for the Church. When one says "synodal Church" the expression is redundant. the Church is either synodal or it is not Church.

That is why we have come to a synod on synodality, to reiterate this. Certainly, we can say that the Church in the West had lost its synodal tradition. The Church of the East has preserved it. One can discuss the ways of living synodality, certainly.

Paul VI set up the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops because he intended to go ahead on this issue. Synod after synod has gone ahead, tentatively, improving, understanding better, maturing.

In 2001 I was a relator for the Synod of Bishops. I substituted for Cardinal Egan who had to return to his diocese, New York, because of the Twin Towers tragedy. I remember that the opinions were collected and sent to the general secretariat.

Then I gathered the material and prepared it for the vote. The secretary of the synod came to see me, read the material and told me to remove this or that detail. There were things he did not consider appropriate and he censored them. There was, in short, a pre-selection of material. There was little understanding of what a synod is.

At the end of the last synod, in the survey on the topics to be dealt with in the next one, the first two were the priesthood and synodality. I understood that it was necessary to reflect on the theology of synodality in order to make a decisive step forward.

It seems fundamental to me to repeat, as I often do, that the synod is not a political meeting nor a committee for parliamentary decisions. It is the expression of the Church where the protagonist is the Holy Spirit.

If there is no Holy Spirit there is no synod. There may be democracy, parliament, debate, but there is no "synod." If you want to read the best book of theology on the synod, then re-read the Acts of the Apostles. There you can clearly see that the protagonist is the Holy Spirit. The action of the Spirit is experienced in the synod. The dynamic of discernment happens.

One experiences, for example, that at times an idea moves quickly, people quarrel and then something happens that brings things together again, that harmonizes them in a creative way.

That is why I like to make it clear that the synod is not focused on a vote, nor is it a dialectical confrontation between a majority and a minority. The risk is also that of losing the overall picture, the sense of things. This has happened with the reduction of synod themes to a particular issue. The Synod on Family, for example. It was said that it was organized to give communion to remarried divorcees.

But in the post-synodal exhortation on this theme there is only a footnote because all the rest are reflections on the theme of the family, such as that on the family catechumenate. There is so much richness. One cannot squeeze it all into the funnel of a single issue.

**I repeat, if the Church is Church, then it is synodal. It has been so from the beginning.**