Conversion to synodality

“Let us journey together in hope” is the title of Message of Pope Francis for Lent this year 2025 , which began with the celebration of Ash Wednesday, a penitential sign that inaugurates our forty-day pilgrimage towards Easter.

“The Lenten journey of penance and the journey of the Synod alike have as their goal a transfiguration, both personal and ecclesial”, Bishop of Rome had underlined in his Message for Lent 2023.

Taking as a reference the experience of the disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor *(cf.* Mt 17:1-9), Francis warns that ” on the synodal journey, when God gives us the grace of certain powerful experiences of communion, we should not imagine that we have arrived”.

After the conclusion of the phases of “consultation of the people of God” and “discernment”, **one may be tempted to think and act as if the synodal process had concluded in October 2024**, when the Second Synod Assembly on Synodality ended, forgetting that we are now in the “implementation” phase of the synod, a key moment to appropriate and deliver the provisions of the *Final Document* approved by the Pope.

Hence the Pope’s insistence this Lent on “conversion to synodality” as a task and mission for the baptised, for **“Church is called to walk together, to be synodal”**, so that we are challenged to leave ourselves behind and not remain selr-absorbed, to go out to meet the other and let the Spirit flow. After all, as Francis says, “Christians are called to walk at the side of others, and never as lone travellers”.

Conversion to synodality is an invitation to hope, leaving behind individualism, the comfort zone and one’s own securities, to go out to meet the other in faith, with the creative impetus of the poet Antonio Machado: *Traveller, your footsteps / are the only path and nothing else; / traveller, there is no path, / you make your own path as you walk.*

For Francis, “**Journeying together means consolidating the unity grounded in our common dignity as children of God** (cf*. Gal* 3:26-28). It means walking

side-by-side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded".

Therefore, as necessary as personal conversion, community conversion is also necessary. Lent and synodality invite us to walk in the same direction, accepting diversity as a gift and "attentive to one another in love and patience", as the Bishop of Rome asks us to do.

For the Lasallian Family, the call to conversion to synodality leads us to ask ourselves, this Lent, "whether we cooperate with others in the service of the Kingdom of God; **whether we show ourselves welcoming, with concrete gestures, to those both near and far**. Whether we others feel a part of the community or keep them at a distance".

These interpellations, proposed by Pope Francis in his Message for Lent 2025, also encourage us to **set our hearts again on the peripheries**, as invited by Lasallian Reflection 10 and the Pastoral Letter of Brother Superior General to the Lasallian Family.