



Pope Francis on Diocesan Synods Cathedral of San Rufino, Assisi Friday, 4 October 2013

“I would like to highlight several aspects of your life as a Community. I do not wish to tell you something new, but rather to confirm you in those things which are most important, and which mark your journey as a diocese.

1. The first thing is to listen to God’s Word. This is what the Church is: ..., it is the community that listens with faith and love to the Lord who speaks. The pastoral plan that you are living out together insists precisely on this fundamental dimension. It is the Word of God that inspires faith, which nourishes and revitalizes it. And it is the Word of God that touches hearts, converts them to God and to his logic which is so different from our own. It is the Word of God that continually renews our communities...

2. The second aspect is walking. It is one of my favourite words when I think about a Christian and about the Church. However, it has a special meaning for you: you are about to enter into the diocesan Synod. To hold a “synod” means to walk together. I think this is truly the most wonderful experience we can have: to belong to a people walking, journeying through history together with their Lord who walks among us! We are not alone, we do not walk alone. We are part of the one flock of Christ that walks together.

... The people .. discover, new ways to walk, it has the “sensus fidei,” as theologians call it. What could be more beautiful than this? During the Synod, it will be very important to consider what the Holy Spirit is saying to the laity, to the People of God, to everyone.

But the most important thing is to walk together by working together, by helping one another, by asking forgiveness, by acknowledging one’s mistakes and asking for forgiveness, and also by accepting the apologies of others by forgiving

3. Therefore: to listen, to walk, and the third aspect is missionary: to proclaim even to the outskirts. .. [those places] where God is absent

Do not be afraid to go out and meet these people and situations. Do not allow yourselves to be impeded by prejudice, by habit, by an intellectual or pastoral rigidity, by the famous “we’ve always done it this way!”. However, we can only go to the outskirts if we carry the Word of God in our hearts and if we walk with the Church, like St Francis. Otherwise, we take ourselves, not the Word of God, and this isn’t good, it doesn’t help anyone! We are not the ones who save the world: it is the Lord himself who saves it!”