

**SENSUS FIDEI  
FIDELIUM**

**A listening & discerning church**

**Monarchical Church**

- Papalisation of the church
- Triumphant, juridical, and clerical
- Pre-Vatican II Magisterium taught and ruled without any contribution from the laity
- Their sole role was to obey
- Church is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship

**Changes at Vatican II**

Recovery of the centrality of baptism – all sharing in Christ's royal priesthood

Trinity  
Holy Spirit

People of God – Pilgrim Church vs hierarchical institution

**LUMEN GENTIUM**

**Vatican II & the People of God**

- The most fundamental Christian calling is baptism and all the baptised share in Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly offices. LG # 10-13
- "This tells us that no one in the Church is useless... we are all necessary for building the Temple. No one is secondary. No one is the most important person in the Church, we are all equal in God's eyes." Francis
- "Inverted pyramid" all are servants

**Revelation & Sensus Fidei**

- Revelation – personal encounter with God – *sensus fidei*. Sense or instinct for God
- "The *sensus fidei* prevents a rigid separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church."

**Sharing in the *sensus fidei***

- Those living the faith
- Reading Scriptures, praying and living the Gospel
- Some confine this to the "practising Catholic"
- Must hear the prophetic voices, voices of the marginalised, uneducated
- Critical voice may require great faith

## Two Synods on the Family

- Consult the people
- Instructing the Bishops to speak up, **parrhesia**
- Even today he wants to encourage open discussion and refuses to silence dissent.
- "Open and fraternal debate makes theological and pastoral thought grow.... That doesn't frighten me. What's more, I look for it."
- Because he believes that in listening to one another we are listening to the Spirit – *locus theologicus*



## Breathing together

- "Let us trust our People, in their memory an in the 'sense of smell,' let us trust that the Holy Spirit in and with our People and that this Spirit is not merely the 'property' of the ecclesial hierarchy."
- The Church listens to the Spirit when all listen to one another.
- Synodality



- "A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realizes that listening "is more than simply hearing". It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:17), in order to know what he "says to the Churches" (Rev2:7)."

## A Communion model of reception

- All belong to the People of God – inspired by the same Spirit
- All participate in teaching and learning
- People express their faith in liturgy, daily living, in their sharing
- The bishops affirm this faith, and if the need arises give a doctrinal teaching or legislate
- Faithful engage this new teaching with their sense of the faith
- Cycle begins again

## Clericalism

### Clericalism

- taking too much responsibility
- Failing to notice the talents and charisms of the faithful

Amazonian Synod – Biodiversity in the church as well as in the rain forest

Many charisms versus Trent's structure concentrated on one holy, "Christ like" priest

## This will require new skills, Structures and Culture

- New more adult level of responsibility for all: bishops, priests and people
- Structures for consultation
- Learning to speak
- Learning to listen
- Learning to discern

### Why even more discernment?

- Takes time and discussion to know what is deep in our hearts
- Even more prayer and time to know what the Spirit is leading us towards
- Listen to what the Spirit is saying – among the many, varied strongly held and sometimes contradictory opinions
- Need bold but humble and generous hearts to speak and also listen attentively, trusting the intentions of others
- Needs to be of the Spirit to be attractive, life-giving and lasting
- If we can develop these habits among the people of God we will have achieved a new culture in the church, irrespective of the other good things we may achieve at the Plenary Council.



### Reliance on the Holy Spirit

- Pentecost, Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch, Peter & Cornelius, the Spirit sets Barnabas & Saul aside and sends them to Seleucia and on to Cyprus. Later Paul feels that the Spirit is forbidding him to go to Asia & Bithynia. But to go to Jerusalem. Council of Jerusalem.
- They had nothing else.
- We too need to befriend and to rely on the Holy Spirit.



### From Church to Kingdom-centred Mission

- To be a more authentic sign of God's hopes for the world, the Kingdom of God
- God is especially present wherever people strive for justice, peace, freedom, reconciliation ....
- We are to strive for and proclaim the Kingdom, but also to seek, celebrate and build on the Spirit's activity
- This requires relationship and contemplation

### A more participatory and dialogical church & mission

- A synodal Church is like a standard lifted up among the nations (cf. Is 11:12) ... As a Church which "journeys together" with men and women, sharing the travails of history, let us cherish the dream that a rediscovery of the inviolable dignity of peoples and of the function of authority as service will also be able to help civil society to be built up in justice and fraternity, and thus bring about a more beautiful and humane world for coming generations.(32) Thank you.

### A joyful & courageous Vision

- But we also need to present a vision of the Gospels and the church which is attractive to our brother and sister Australians
- It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but "by attraction". EG 14
- Nietzsche's challenge
- Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church" GE 9



### A HUMBLE BUT CONFIDENT POPE

Lead us to be a transformed, humble and yet confident missionary Church