

The Synod: The Church's Heart-to-Heart

Conversations can change things.

Good, engaging heart-to-hearts can change *us*.

In fact, a good conversation can change *the church*.

Think back to a really good conversation you've had...

Talking late into the night, sometimes over a pint or over a glass of wine...

Sometimes talking well past lunch or over a steaming cup of coffee...

What made that talk so gripping for you?

A really good heart-to-heart, one that lasts well into the night,

depends on everyone having something to say

AND on everyone eagerly listening

A good conversation depends on passion:

a deeply-felt desire to sharing something and a heartfelt need to listen.

Maybe there have been times in your life when a loved one has closed down

– a friend, a parent, a spouse, a child.

And you longed for them to open up

and tell you what has been weighing on their souls.

And then perhaps they did open up...

A teen sharing with her parents what's really going on,

A father telling his son something about his past,

A wife revealing a painful memory to her husband,

Think of how much eager listening

and how much deeply felt speaking goes on there.

Such a conversation changes things.

We leave heart-to-hearts different,
closer to the person we were talking to;
We change through the intimacy of a simple talk.

Jesus knows the power of conversation.

He comes to Nazareth, his hometown, and starts a conversation
over a few powerful lines from the prophet Isaiah.

Notice, Jesus has something to say,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...to bring glad tidings to the poor
“...liberty to captives...sight to the blind
...to let the oppressed go free”

And, amazingly, he proclaims this good news is fulfilled!

Yes, Jesus has something to say.

He starts a conversation called the Gospel:

The good news of God’s love for us,
God’s presence with us no matter what.

He starts this conversation under the power of the Spirit.

Are we listening? What might we say back to Jesus?

Now, St. Paul tells us this same Spirit that drove Jesus is with us, in us:

“in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.”

The church, for St. Paul, is the Body of Christ:

We are one body, one community
Even though individually we are very different,
like the parts of the human body making a single person.

We are one body because of the Spirit

It is the Spirit who makes us to make one community, one church.

Here and now, this same Divine Spirit is asking us to take part
In the conversation Jesus began.

This conversation can change the whole church, indeed, the whole world.
It is called the synod,
an ancient church practice dedicated to listening to the Spirit
and speaking one's truth.

Basically, the synod is a great big conversation in the church,
a true heart-to-heart in which we all listen to each other,
And, above all, to the Spirit speaking to us through each other.

Now, it is definitely NOT just the bishops talking to themselves
Or even all the clergy talking to each other.
It is for everyone since we are all the church.
After all, God's Spirit dwells in you, *here and now*.

In this conversation, this synod,
the church needs you to share
what you're going through,
what your experience of God is,
how the church needs to grow,
how you have met God in the church – in this cathedral church.

The Spirit that impelled Jesus to start the life-changing conversation
called the Gospel
Now asks YOU to participate in a true heart-to-heart.

Will you join the conversation?
Each of you has something to say.
And the Spirit asks each of you to listen.

St. Matthew's Cathedral parish has opportunities to join the conversation.

Pope Francis calls them "listening sessions."

You can attend one in person or by zoom.

We have them scheduled throughout the month of February.

[Click here](#) for details.

This is the concrete way you can not only join the conversation called "Gospel"

But also help to change the church

And allow the Spirit to release YOU from all bonds

Restore your sight

Give you the joy of God.

While this is a conversation that could last long into the night,

We ask only an hour

One day in February

In which you will share and listen with other parishioners.

By doing so, you create a space for the Holy Spirit

to transform the church AND your life.

By joining the church's heart-to-heart called synod

you will unleash the mercy of God into a suffering world

You will share in Jesus' mission to bring glad tidings to all.

CATHEDRAL OF ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE

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