

Synod Hopes

By Bishop Michael Campbell of Lancaster



The Bishop of Lancaster shares his personal reflections as he prepares to go to Rome for the three-week world Synod of Bishops dedicated to the new evangelisation, which meets at the Vatican from 7 October–28 October:

The forthcoming Synod of Bishops in Rome will discuss the wide-ranging and urgent question of how to present the Catholic Faith in a manner which is relevant and meaningful to the people of our age. It is commonly accepted that the Church requires a 'new evangelisation' to present afresh the gospel of Jesus Christ as the answer to the deeper longings and aspirations of the human heart in a rapidly changing and often unsettled world.

The Synod will provide a forum for an exchange of contemporary views and experiences from every part of the world on the best and most effective ways of proclaiming the truth of the gospel in our time. I would hope that such sharing will be accompanied by careful listening in order to discern what the Holy Spirit might be saying to the Church. What will be required of me as a bishop is the gift to read 'the signs of the times' through the material and data presented to us in the Synod discussions.

During these weeks in Rome I would also hope that the Synod Fathers would affirm in their faith those countless Catholics whose daily lives, often humble, unspectacular, and hidden, are marked by fidelity, goodness and devotion to the Lord and his Church. Such an affirmation would acknowledge the presence of God's grace and the truly incarnational nature of their apparently ordinary lives. Their lives are Christian witness writ large!

A challenge facing the Synod is how to recognise all that is presently good and praiseworthy in a world characterised by quite remarkable technological innovation and progress, while reaffirming at the same time the wonder of divine revelation and the eternal God's disclosure of himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Can the Synod point the way to an appropriate language to speak of the Word incarnate to the present-day technological-scientific mindset while remaining in continuity with the long tradition we have inherited, which ultimately derives from the Apostles and Christ himself?

Above all, I hope that in the light of the Synod we bishops, and all others who attend, will return with a word of encouragement and reassurance to our good people as they live out and witness to their Catholic faith in the twenty-first century.

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