



WALKING TOGETHER

ARCHBISHOP TIM'S WEEKLY THOUGHTS
FOR REFLECTION FROM THE SYNOD

Sunday 24 September, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I write this message, I am on my way to Rome to take part in the Synod of Bishops. According to the “moving map” on the screen in front of me, we are just flying above Abu Dhabi and we still have six and a half hours to go before we reach our destination.

The Synod of Bishops is an institution which was initiated by Pope Paul VI at the time of the Second Vatican Council. Pope Paul IV saw it as an important way to maintain that spirit of co-operation and discernment among the bishops of the world which had been a vital part of the work of Vatican II. We call this reality of bishops’ collaboration “collegiality”.

The Synod also fosters the same spirit of collaboration with the Holy Father who is, of course, the bishop of Rome, and who presides over the Synod. In our Catholic tradition it is through our communion with our local bishop that we are in communion with all the other bishops of the world, and in this way also in communion with the Pope as the successor of St Peter. We call this the “primacy” of the Petrine (Peter’s) Ministry. Our communion with the Bishop of Rome thus grounds and ensures our communion with all our brothers and sisters in the faith.

One of our main tasks as Catholics, therefore, is to recognise, embrace and deepen this reality of “communion” in the Church. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed that all His disciples might be one, as He and His Heavenly Father are one. Sometimes we understand this phrase as a call to work for better relations between ourselves as Catholics and Christians who belong to other Churches and Christian communities. This is true, of course, but it also refers to our own local Church in the Archdiocese of Perth. Each local

Catholic parish, led by its parish priest, forms part of the Catholic Church in Perth, which is led by the bishop, who is appointed by the Pope. In our local Church of Perth, we are called to be in communion with each other through our communion with our local bishop and, with him, to be in communion with Rome.

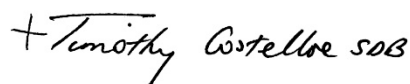
We are all fallible human beings with our own foibles, prejudices and scars, but we are also baptised members of the Lord's Church, given new life by the Spirit at our baptism and sustained by God's grace at every moment. God is asking us to recognise His will for us in the prayer of Jesus that we might all be one, and to commit ourselves to responding to that prayer by making the unity and communion of the Catholic community in our Archdiocese a fundamental priority.

It is my hope that one of the outcomes of the Synod will be a renewed appreciation of this communion, without which we cannot be fully the Church the Lord wants us to be. The discussions at the Synod, and any eventual decisions made after the Synod concludes with a second Assembly in 2024, are meant to breathe new life into the Church at every level. The hunger for this new life, and the hope that it will come, were very strong at the Diocesan Assembly Formation Day which was held on Saturday 23 September at Newman College. A significant number of delegates from our parishes and other Church agencies and communities gathered to begin a process of discernment, leading we hope, to the re-establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council. This will be a body of lay people, religious and clergy who will, together, provide advice to me as the bishop on ways in which we can better bring the message and the beauty of the gospel, of our faith in Christ, to each other and to the society in which we live.

An important journey began in our Archdiocese on 23 September 2023. Another important journey will begin on 30 September when the Synod in Rome formally begins with an Ecumenical Prayer Service in St Peter's Square. The two journeys have much in common. I am convinced that our local journey will be enriched by what is soon to commence in Rome. How fortunate we are to belong to the Lord's world-wide Catholic Church. How fortunate we are to have the gift of the papacy as a central focus of our unity in Christ. How fortunate we are to belong to the Lord's Church in our Archdiocese and in our local parish. May we all be one as Christ and His Heavenly Father are one.

From somewhere over the Middle East, with my prayers for you all

Yours sincerely in Christ,



+Archbishop Tim Costelloe SDB DD

Archbishop of Perth