

A CHURCH THAT SEES, HEARS AND INCLUDES

At the heart of synodality is the call to be a Church that truly listens, one that creates space for voices long silenced or ignored. Too often, structures and habits within our ministries unintentionally reinforce exclusion. Certain voices dominate while others, particularly those of the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised, go unheard. When this happens, the Body of Christ is incomplete, and the work of the Gospel is diminished.

Sister Genevieve Jeanningros reminds us, *No one should encounter injustice or be thrown away, everyone has dignity of being a child of God.* Yet, within our own Church and ministries let us ask:

- Do we see those who feel discarded?
- Do we recognise the barriers that prevent true participation?

The call to synodality demands that we confront these uncomfortable truths, that we examine not only the voices present at the table but also those absent. The empty chair among us is not just symbolic, it is a stark reminder of the people left outside our conversations and decision-making.

Pope Francis urges,

Do not tire of accentuating your commitment to the needs of humanity... This missionary calling is directed above all towards the crucified of our age – the poor, the weak, the oppressed and those discarded by many forms of injustice.

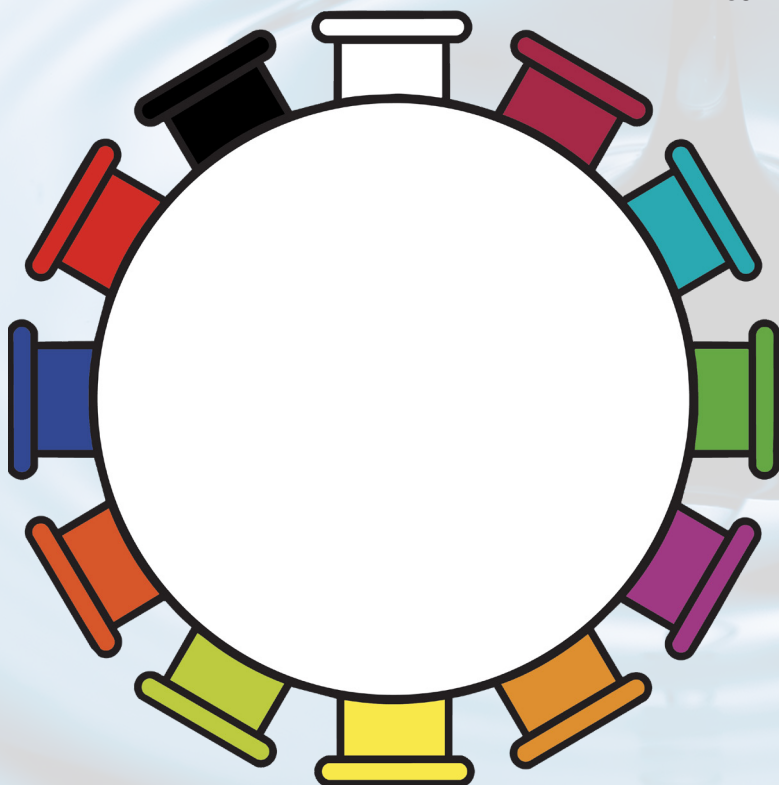
His words challenge us to ask:

- Who suffers because we fail to listen?
- What injustices persist because we have not made room for those with lived experience?

The work of Catholic ministries is most effective when it reflects the Gospel's radical inclusion – when we not only hear but are changed by the voices of those who struggle. True discernment requires courage:

- to welcome discomfort,
- to allow difficult truths to shape us, and
- to be accountable for the change we seek.

If we are to walk together in faith, then every person, especially those most often excluded, must be part of the journey. Anything less reduces synodality to mere rhetoric rather than a lived commitment to justice and communion.



God of Unity,
May we continue to be
transformed through the
ongoing journey of discernment,
and may we always remain
open to the unexpected ways
the Spirit is calling us
to greater love, service and unity.
Amen

REFLECTION:

Whose voices have we yet to truly listen to and how might our ministries change if we allowed their experiences to shape our decisions and actions?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live.