

**“SOLIDARITY AND SYNODALITY: WUCWO REFLECTING  
IN TIME OF CRISIS”**

**NOTES FOR WEBINAR HELD ON THIS THEME  
ON 28<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020**

**FR. GERRY WHELAN SJ**

- Plan of our session
  - 1.30 Opening Prayer, Introductions
  - 1.50-2.40: Lecture on Solidarity
  - 2.40-2.50 Break
  - 2.50-3.00 Group meetings
  - 3.00 -3.30 Lecture on Synodality
  - 3.30 Optional group meetings
  
- Lecture on Solidarity
  - Introduction from Pope Francis
  - Old Testament
  - New Testament
  - History of the Church
    - WUCWO
  - Vatican II
  - Pope John Paul II
  - Pope Francis
  
- Lecture on Synodality
  - Pope Francis approach
    - To achieve our mission of solidarity we will need to be a “Synodal Church”
    - Synod of Bishops 2022. “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”
  - Scriptural and Historical introduction
  - Document of the International Theological Commission, 2018
    - “Synodality In the Life and Mission Of the Church”

## LECTURE ON SOLIDARITY

- Urbi et Orbi address
  - <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/urbi-et-orbi-pope-coronavirus-prayer-blessing.html>
  - Evil, moral and physical
  - We ignored much moral evil in our global behaviours
  - Physical evil has forced us to display solidarity
  - Opportunity for repentance
    - Moral solidarity after the reopening?
- Old Testament solidarity
  - Moses and the People of Israel
    - The covenant
    - The land of Israel
  - What kind of governance?
  - The prophets,
    - Hosea 6:6: “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”
    - Jeremiah 31:31-33 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke ... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.”
- New Testament solidarity
  - Relationship with Jesus/solidarity with each other
    - Mark 1:14-15 “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Good News of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
    - Luke 4: 18-21: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”
  - Early Church, problems with solidarity
    - 1 Corinthians 3:4 “I am for Paul, I am for Apollos”
    - The Johannine community
      - John 6:35 “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

- John 20:30-31 “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may **have life** in his name.”
    - 1 John 1 “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may **have fellowship** with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our<sup>[a]</sup> joy complete.”
  - History of the Church
    - Roman Empire
      - Letter of Pope Clement to the Corinthians 70AD
      - Roman Emperor Julian: “Atheism [I.e. the Christian faith!] has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers, and through their care for the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar, and that the godless Galileans care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help that we should render them.” (<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/342592-the-roman-emperor-julian-writing-in-the-fourth-century-regretted>)
    - Middle Ages
      - St. Benedict and the establishment of European culture (600AD)
      - Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas
        - Sacratifying grace/habit of charity
          - Holiness failing in charity?
    - The Early Modern era (1500-1900)
      - Mainstream culture leaves the Catholic Church behind
        - Political
          - Protestant reformation, French revolution
        - Intellectual
          - Scientific revolution, Enlightenment
          - Atheism and solidarity
            - Liberal Democracy: “Liberté! Égalité! Fraternity!”
            - Marxism: solidarity of the working class
      - Partly the fault of rigid thinking on the part of the Catholic Church
        - Neo-scholastic theology
          - Pre/modern, Aristotle and Aquinas
            - Abstract, universal truths, answers rather than questions
            - Little sense of history, the need for doctrine to develop
          - Theological themes
            - Revelation—Jesus taught truths of the faith
            - The Church—Hierarchical
            - Lay people: “Pray, pay, obey!”

- The world—prophets of doom!
  - Catholic Social Teaching
    - Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* 1891
      - Workers rights, the need to moderate of capitalism.
    - History of WUCWO
- Vatican II
  - All documents available:
    - [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm)
  - Opening speech of Pope John XXIII
    - Aggiornamento
    - Don't be prophets of doom
    - Modern methods of study.
  - Documents
    - From “classicism” to “historical consciousness”
    - Revelation as “self-revelation of God through words and deeds” (*Dei Verbum*, 2)
      - Faith “persons commit their whole selves to God who reveals” (*Dei Verbum* 7)
    - The Church as “People of God” (*Lumen Gentium* Chapter 2)
    - *Gaudium et Spes*; The Church in the Modern World
      - “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.”
    - Role for lay people
      - Primary implementers of the mission of the Church *ad extra* to the world.
      - *Lumen Gentium* “The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one Head... the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances

where only through them can it become the salt of the earth” (*Lumen Gentium* 33)

- Vatican II and theological method
  - Responding to the “Signs of the times”
  - “See, Judge, Act.”
- Implementing Vatican II
  - Solidarity with the modern world includes prophetic challenge to it
    - Paul VI *Humanae Vitae* 1968
    - Abortion
  - Liberation theology of Latin America
    - “The cry of the poor”
    - Social justice
    - 1984, cautions: “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation’”
  - Pope John Paul II
    - 1987 “*Sollicitudine Rei Socialis*” The “virtue of solidarity”
    - [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html)
    - “In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbour is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbor must therefore be loved ... Solidarity therefore must play its part in the realization of this divine plan, both on the level of individuals and on the level of national and international society. The "evil mechanisms" and "structures of sin" of which we have spoken can be overcome only through the exercise of the human and Christian solidarity to which the Church calls us and which she tirelessly promotes” (SRS, paragraph 40).
  - Pope Francis
    - *Evangelii Gaudium*:
      - [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)
      - “But to whom should she go first?... Today and always, “the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel.”... We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them (EG. 47)
    - *Laudato Si'*
      - [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

- “A technocracy which sees no intrinsic value in lesser beings coexists with the other extreme, which sees no special value in human beings. But one cannot prescind from humanity. There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology. ... Human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognized and valued (LS. Paragraph 118)
- Urbi et Orbi address, 27 March 2020
  - We were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: “Wake up, Lord!”. ... This Lent your call reverberates urgently: “Be converted!”, “Return to me with all your heart” (*Joel 2:12*). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. ...
  - Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity.

## LECTURE ON SYNODALITY

In October 2022, bishops from around the world will meet in Rome to discuss the theme: “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”

Main suggestion: read this document of the Vatican’s International Theological Commission, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church”

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_synodalita\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_synodalita_en.html)

(See, Gerard Whelan, *A Discerning Church: Pope Francis, Bernard Lonergan and a Theological Method for the Future* (NJ: Paulist Press, 2019)