

26th Sun OT – Luke 16:19-31

Pope Francis reimagined the ***synod*** that included the laity and religious from all over the world meeting as equals with the cardinals and bishops, an approach to decision-making that should occur at every level of the Church's life. Of course, this is NOT a call for a Third Vatican Council.

It is precisely this path of synodality, Pope Francis writes, which God expects of the Church in our approach to decision-making at every level of the Church's life by reflecting on our strengths and failings, including St. Francis de Sales.

Today's gospel seems appropriate for our Synod Sunday. "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table." Can we interpret this gospel in another way?

The gospel passage begs us to reflect, are there those who are excluded from our ***heavenly banquet table*** like Lazarus sitting outside our church doors? What about our Church in general, are there those who are not invited because of differences in creed? Maybe it is simply a matter of liturgical practice, or simply by choice of songs, or a doily missing on their head? Maybe we didn't invite them personally, whoever "them" may be?

Internal division is not the ideal of Christianity, just the opposite. On the night before Jesus died he prayed for ***the unity of his Church***, linking it with his own unity with the Father, "I pray also for those who will believe in me...that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you." Yet the new commandment Jesus offered can work if only put into practice: "Love one another as I have loved you." That is what our programs here at Saint Francis de Sales try to do by simply putting love into practice.

In the 4th century, the Arians were excluded from the Catholic Church, the Ecclesia, in the 5th, it was the Nestorians and the Monophysites which is the present day Coptic Church, from the 9th to 11th we saw the split of the Eastern and Western Churches, and the 16th the division of the Catholic from the Protestant. Years from now what will our present division be called? Can we heal this division now, or is it too late?