

I stay within and involved in the Church because it's so sad and disappointing that we are on a road to self destruction.

Bishops, are you listening? For me, a truly synodal church will be less overtly hierarchical and will acknowledge the harm of clericalism. A gospel-led Church "journeys together." But in my church, drawbridges, once raised for the People of God in Vatican II, are now in front of me, everywhere. The fruits from a synodal church will replace an autocratic clericalist culture. They will bring humble leadership, inclusivity for women, and transparency. We will listen to all baptised people. Synodality has no meaning in a guarded church media or within parishes that exclude information pertaining to renewal. Walking TOGETHER, really? Shamefully, local Catholic media in my Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn, recently censored retired Archbishop Francis Carroll. He was shut down when he dared to speak for a synodal outlook living up to Vatican II open doors and aspirations. A synodal pastoral church will not accept inertia and obfuscation – clerically sanctioned coverup which has to be named. These are not the tools of a synodal church. Pleasingly, there are exceptions, courageous priests and parishes that ARE engaged with diverse opinion in parish print- and e-bulletins, newsletters. Such priests express Pope Francis' urging, to become synodal and welcoming. As opposed to the empty rhetoric found in much of hierarchical church, pastoral priests and parishes that live synodally actualise the vision of Vatican II for a synodal Church. They give me hope for a renewed church in which inclusive decisions respect local cultures, communities, and circumstances. (Name provided)