Andante Initial Synod Response

The Andante synod response is an amalgamation of the main points raised by the individual member organisations who submitted responses to their local Bishops’ Conferences.

Andante members were gratefulto Pope Francis for his bold initiative and universally look forward to playing their part in making the synodal church a reality. Members pointed out that as a Catholic Women’s movement we have been on the synodal way for a long time.

Many mentioned the joy and love they have for the Catholic Church and their belonging to a worldwide community that is inspired and nourished by the Eucharist. However it is also possible to be critical and loyal, and the synodal process must be a search for the answer to the Church’s place in society today.

 The following issues tended to dominate the responses and it was widely perceived the institutional Church had failed to realise the distress and anger these issues have caused.

There has been a widespread loss of trust and credibility for the Church amongst its members and society generally, as a result of the sex abuse crisis and the failure of the hierarchy to address this issue effectively.

Ministries of the Church should be open to men and women, married or single and there must be gender justice at all levels of the Church. There must be equal dignity for men and women founded in the image of God, which is reflected in Church law and leading to the opening up of ordination offices.

Respondents wanted more structure for the laity to be involved as equals, even within the synod meeting in Prague the laity are only going to be present for part of it. There must be more pastoral attention to parishioners, so communities can grow and faith be deepened. Without community and participation there can be no mission.

Respondents commentated there needs to be mercy and love for some minority groups such as divorced and remarried, LGBTQ people, as the Church’s teaching on moral issues makes it seem remote from Society.

It was mentioned young people often do not want to commit for life, but are happy to join for a sacramental programme or festival, so these should be opportunities for the Church to engage with these people and so be part of their lives.

The purpose of the Church is to bring people closer to God so sharing the joy of the gospel must have priority over bureaucracy.

We should advise the Church must listen to the Holy Spirit and take women seriously, encouraging theological research and exploring a priesthood which can serve the Church of tomorrow.

This Church must communicate with the world which is digital and globally networked, and therefore must use modern methods of communication to share that message and raise awareness of gospel values in public life.