

LEADING AND ACTING: Truth-Telling, Synodality and Mission for a Better World

MOHMOV
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Norton svd

Truth-telling is a process of openly
sharing historical truths after
periods of conflict to allow societies
to move forward in a more
inclusive way, based on justice and
human rights.

Truth-telling can involve activities at local, state, national, and international levels. For example: official apologies, truth and reconciliation, ceremonies, public art; in community halls, churches, museums, cultural centres, schools, universities



Local truth-telling is particularly powerful, especially when it occurs in small communities where people are able to develop personal relationships through the process, or build respect and understanding. (Reconciliation Australia website)

Truth-telling is critical for developing an official record and shared understanding across Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal community in Victoria of our history. Truth-telling can change people's minds and behaviour

Truth-telling will:

- Recognise injustices actively hidden from Australian consciousness
- Change how Australian history is viewed
- Empower individuals to share stories
- Expose causes/results of colonisation, who is responsible, harm caused, and how these structures continue to impact First Peoples of Victoria

First Peoples'
Assembly of
Victoria

Truth & Justice Commissions

Australia, 2021: Victoria created commission of inquiry into "violent dispossession and genocide of Aboriginal people during colonisation"

Chile, 1990 : Commission investigated deaths, disappearances, human rights abuses under Augusto Pinochet's rule; Report used by government for pensions and other benefits to survivors

El Salvador: Established by UN (Comisión de la Verdad); part of Chapultepec Peace Accords to end Salvadoran Civil War; investigated murders and executions including that of Óscar Romero in 1980 and six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter in 1989

Algeria

Bangladesh

Brazil

Canada

Chad

Colombia

Congo (DRC)

Czech Republic

Ecuador

Fiji

Finland

Gambia

Ghana

Mauritius, 2009: covering 370 years; explored impact of slavery (unique in that it dealt with “socio-economic class abuses” and explored possibility of reparations)

Panama, 2000: reported that former military regime engaged in torture & other forms of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment

Rwanda, 1999: International non-governmental organizations created International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations since October 1990; it did not advance due to Rwandan genocide of 1994; A new National Unity and Reconciliation Commission formed in 1999 to promote reconciliation after the genocide

Guatemala

Haiti

Honduras

Ireland

Kenya

Liberia

Morocco

Nepal

New
Zealand

Nigeria

Norway

Paraguay

Solomon Islands, 2009: Truth and Reconciliation Commission to "address people's traumatic experiences during 5-year ethnic conflict on Guadalcanal (1999–2004)"

South Africa (after transition from apartheid): Mandela formed commission under leadership of Tutu to study effects of apartheid; simply called Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Sweden, 2020: Independent Truth commission to study past abuse of Sámi by state

Timor-Leste (East Timor): Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (2001); Indonesia–Timor Leste Commission of Truth & Friendship (2005)

Peru

Poland

Seychelles

Sierra Leone

South Korea

Sri Lanka

Taiwan

Togo

Tunisia

Uganda

Ukraine

Uruguay

USA

Synod / Synodality (Dr. Jessica Murdoch, Villanova University)



■ Synods are a way of ensuring that the voices of the people of the church are heard and advice from the episcopate is given

■ Synods are a way in which we draw together as the members of the church

■ People have always gathered on different matters

FORGING THE FUTURE

Synod 2021

**FUTURECHURCH
SYNOD SESSIONS**
SIX WEDNESDAYS
IN LENT

MARCH 2 - APRIL 13

- The Church teaches that it's divinely founded, and its essential structureis divinely ordered
- Parish councils, bishops' conferences, Synod of Bishops, helpful, but not part of Church's divinely ordered constitution
- Synod intended to foster communion among bishops, and with pope
- It is a distinctly human – not divine – institution
- Lessons from Anglican communion

(Murdoch, Catholic Newsagency, Oct 2018)



Synodality (Thomas Petri, O.P.)



Synod 2021
2023

The Pope wants to hear from YOU!

#ListeningChurch

"the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God" (doc)

Sensus fidei: another concept used to advance a more collaborative approach to forming / articulating Church teaching. Like synodality, the sense of the faithful is prone to misunderstanding and misinterpretation

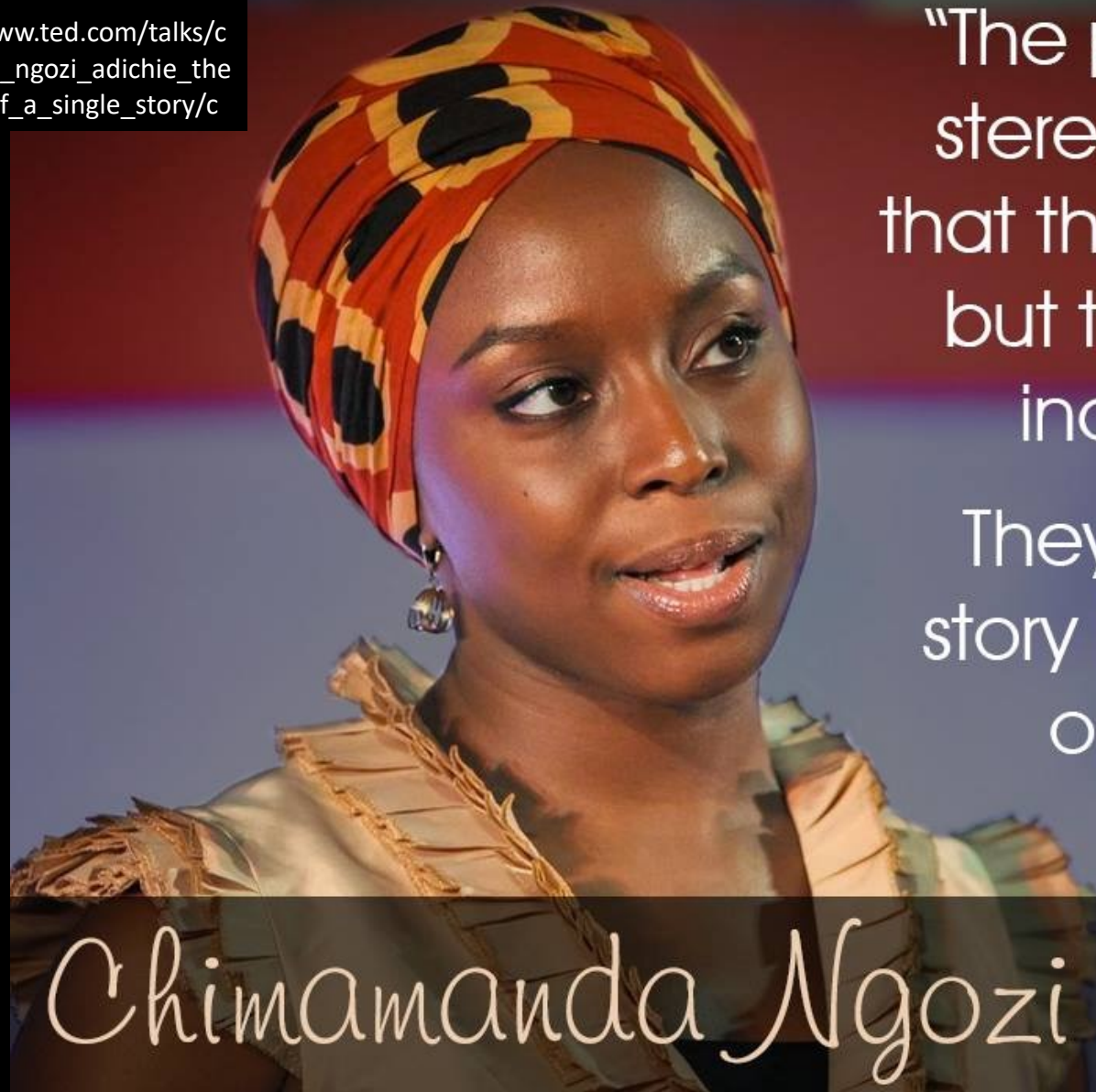
The Synodal Way

(Synodality: A Guide for the Perplexed,
Melbourne Catholic 2021)

- An extension of developments borne of Vatican II, letting them affect the actual structures and institutions that make up the Church
- Involves lay people in discussions so that future of Church can be walked while knowing genuine needs of her people
- 'It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth' (EG §171)

- It is also a healing salve, for a 'culture imbued with clericalism' that the Church has inherited (§6 Synodality Doc)
- Path of synodality should be seen as path of mission; Theme of Synod is Communion, Participation, Mission
 - It is about changing our mentalities and trying to direct the institutional makeup of the Church to be more mission-oriented

https://www.ted.com/talks/cchimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/c



"The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.

They make one story become the only story."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

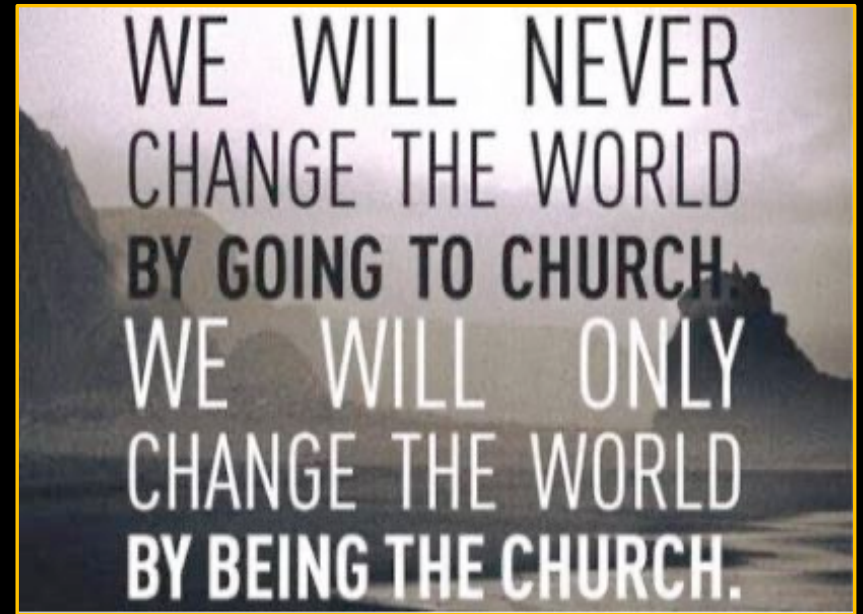
- *Proclaiming, serving and witnessing to to God's reign of salvation, love and justice*

(Schroeder 2008)

- *Single but complex reality*

(John Paul II – RM 41)

- When the first communities moved beyond boundaries of Judaism, the church was born
- Only in understanding that God's mission resided in them did they understand themselves as church
- Church realizes itself in mission, in evangelization
 - *missionary by its very nature; deepest identity* (EG)
 - *the mission has a church* (Bevans)



The church becomes the church as it engages in the practices of the Trinity

Mission as Dialogue

- A spirituality, a basic attitude
- *The norm and necessary manner for every form of Christian mission* (Vat Sec for Non- Christians 1984)
- A way of doing mission that is convinced of the Spirit's presence prior to the arrival of the missionary
- Openness to being evangelized by those we are evangelizing
- *Dialogue aimed at 'converting' the other to one's own religious faith and tradition is dishonest and unethical; it is not the way of harmony* (FABC)

Always prefer to be taught by all, rather than desiring to teach even the least of all (EG 117 – quoting John of the Cross)

Each person dialogues with his or her identity. The church grows by attraction not proselytizing (P. Francis - Argentine weekly *Viva*)

The church must discover the power of silence. Confronted with the sorrows, doubts and uncertainties of people she cannot pretend to give easy solutions (Tagle 2012)

Silence not only gives us the God who is Stillness, but, just as importantly, teaches the public self of us what to speak (Chittister, Wisdom) *Mission as Dialogue*

- *The prophet is one “whose eye is opened, and who hears and speaks the words of God; [...] a person of three times: the promise of the past, the contemplation of the present, the courage to point out the path toward the future* (P. Francis, 2013)

- Prophecy always employs dialogue method - more than being nice
 - Can be joyful, difficult, risky (calculated), need to be faithful – even to death; Rooted in Dialogue: listen / see, discern / judge, speak out / act

Mission as Prophecy

(Dorothy Stang SSND)



(OCSO monks of Tibhirine)

- Living / working in Christian community is also counter-cultural and prophetic (Gerhard Lohfink)
- *Standing with the poor, for human life, for creation, for community's integrity is part of being missional church*

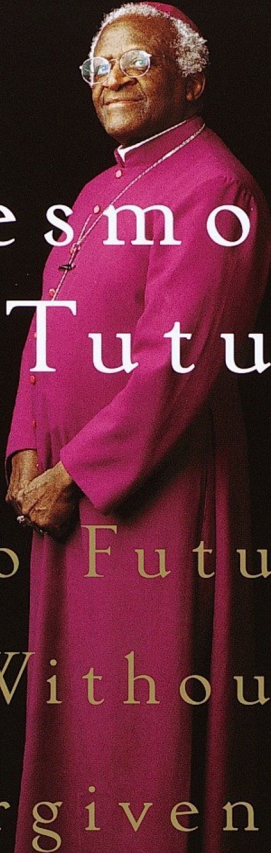
Reconciliation

(as prophetic dialogue)

*Often painful,
risky,
unsuccessful*

1. Personal: broken relationships, physical-sexual abuse, violent crimes
2. Cultural: Native Americans, Aborigines, African Americans, Latinos/as, Catholics and Protestants
3. Political: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions - Guatemala; Rwanda; Sri Lanka
4. Ecclesial: Current sexual abuse scandal; women in the church

Reconciliation

A portrait of Desmond Tutu, an elderly Black man with glasses, wearing a purple cassock and a red zucchetto. He is standing with his hands clasped in front of him, looking slightly to the side with a gentle smile.

Desmond Tutu

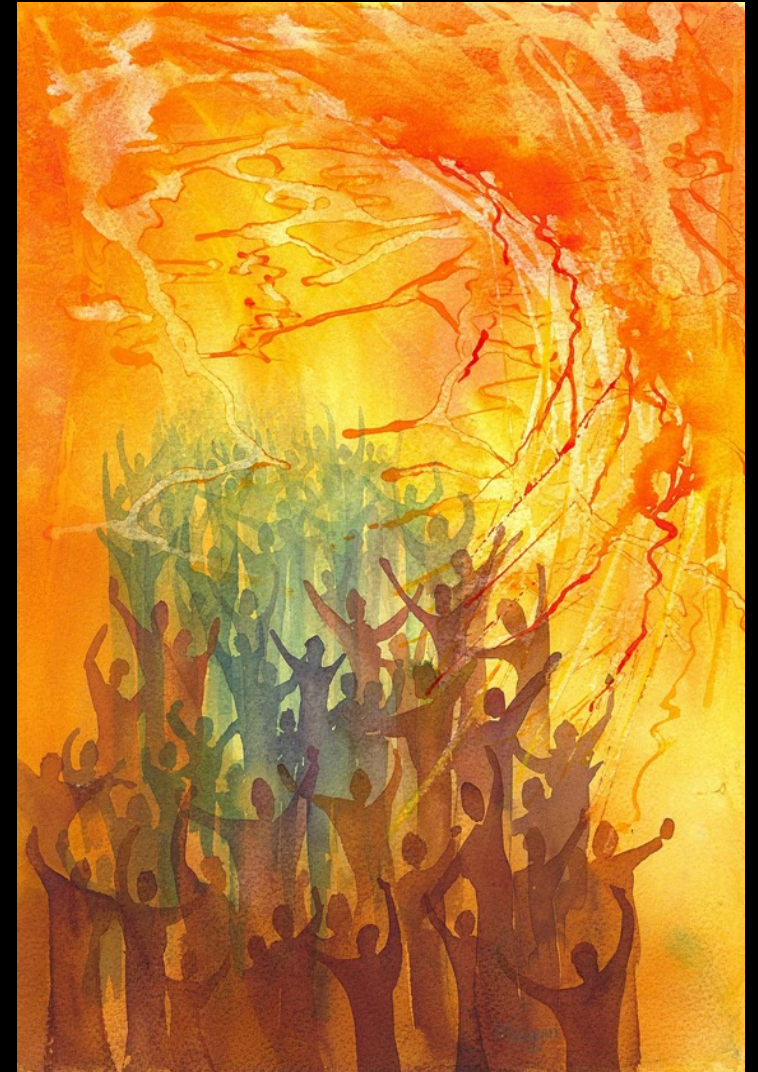
No Future Without Forgiveness

"In its sober depiction and searing indictment of evil and in its never-maudlin advocacy of love, this is a masterpiece."
— KIRKUS REVIEWS

- *The new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life* (EG 239)
- *Forgiveness is not just a nice word to us: We bet on it, we cultivate it, and we know it is very much in the human nature to strive for a peaceful existence. We know love only begets love and that this is true even with one's enemies. Love, not revenge, settles the score* (Carolyn Woo, CRS)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God

2 Cor 5, 17-20



Pentecost by Mark Wiggin

Spirituality of *RECONCILIATION*

- Learn to listen
- Develop interior life
 - Be present
 - Accept anger
- Develop communities of reconciliation
 - Develop ways of celebrating the sacrament
- Do not be afraid



Anne Jordan PBVM

- Coordinator of Cana Communities (2013), an organisation dealing largely with people who've become homeless through mental illness and addiction
- Everyone's life deserves to be celebrated
- Cana's mission: help people with "least options", including former prisoners transitioning to life outside prison / newly-settled refugees
 - From modest beginnings in 1975, the charity has grown to encompass five homes, three shelters and a farm, and is supported by more than 700 volunteers

- After a pilgrimage to Saint Mother Mary's, she pointed me to see His mission and called this to follow in serving Jesus.
- I sat on the ground after returning from overwhelming and calling, overwhelmed by passionate the words of



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- Supporting returning veterans and families with PTSD / other challenges
 - Practical, direct support to our wounded, injured and sick...
- Brisbane archdiocese has 70,000 (25%) of veterans
 - Almost every week one young veteran commits suicide
- Timor Awakening aims to prevent veteran suicide and improve the well-being of veterans and their families
 - 1 year holistic health and wellbeing program / 10-day trip to East Timor that builds camaraderie between veterans (former guerrillas); offers care and support, and engagement with Timorese people



Deacon Gary Stone
Veterans' Care Association (VCA)

Spirituality of *RECONCILIATION*

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