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CO-RESPONSIBLE DISCIPLES

HOMILY

Gen 9:1-13; Mark 8:27-33

"This is the sign of the covenant I make with you and with every living thing that is with you: I will put my rainbow in the firmament as a sign of my covenant with the earth.

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is fortunate that our meeting on co-responsibility between pastors and the lay faithful, under the auspices of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, is taking place under the sign of the covenant that today's liturgy offers us to meditate on: I will set my rainbow in the firmament as a sign of my covenant with the earth. This promise to Noah has been repeated in many ways in the history of salvation until its supreme fulfilment in Christ, the mediator of the new and eternal covenant. Mark's Gospel portrays a key moment in the disciples' journey with their Master. "And who do you say that I am? Peter answers correctly and eagerly: You are the Christ! However, he has to go through a difficult process to come to think not like men but like God! At the announcement of the Cross, he impulsively steps in to correct the Master, receiving a stern admonition that suppresses his claim to lead and puts him in his place as disciple and servant.

Coming from the four corners of the world, we are gathered at the call of the Holy Father to pray and reflect together on the theme: Pastors and lay faithful called to journey together in the vast search for a synodal Church. Thus gathered by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Church, in this high place of Christianity, we want to rethink together for today and for tomorrow our way of being Church in the service of evangelisation. Having participated in the European continental meeting of the synod in Prague, I can testify that significant progress is emerging from the search for better participation and collaboration between pastors and lay faithful. A new alliance is taking shape on the path of synodality, an alliance that is restorative and mobilising.

Is it not necessary to overcome certain tensions, rivalries and power struggles? Is it not necessary to create a better fraternal climate between all, beyond mutual accusations, authoritarianism, indifferentism and abuses of all kinds, in short, beyond purely human ways of thinking and acting? "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thy thoughts are not of God but of men. Recognising that we all deserve some reproach from the Lord, must we not also learn to think differently, to change our ways of doing things by accepting corrections and changes that favour the participation of all in the common mission? This is the challenge we face in these days of reflection, which we want to live in communion with the brothers and sisters of our respective Churches, who are waiting for our deliberations to produce good fruits for the development of a synodal Church. Let us ask for the grace not to disappoint them!

I will put my rainbow in the firmament as a sign of my covenant with the earth. Dear brothers and sisters, this sign of covenant is a call to communion in a world scarred by conflict, division and war. God has placed his Church as a rainbow that joins heaven and earth in a divine-human way. The Church is a fragile sign, like a boat tossed by the waves, but it gives hope to the poor who suffer and long for the freedom of the Kingdom. This ecclesial sign of hope is based on the power of the Risen Christ, which is reflected in the colours of his rainbow: the universal white of our common baptismal dignity, the red of the Spirit of Love poured into hearts, the blue of Marian tenderness, the luminous yellow of the pontifical magisterium at the service of unity, the green of nature, respected and promoted as a common home for all peoples. The Church is this sign of harmony through her communion, she is this rainbow that announces calm after the storm, reconciliation after offences, peace after war. May God grant that the harmony of

her colours, for which we are all jointly responsible, may be the luminous dawn of the Kingdom and the light of the nations.

To this end, we must answer Jesus' question in today's Gospel: And who do you say that I am? Peter precedes us and guides us with his answer. What about our answer, for us: Who is Jesus? It is not enough to pay lip service to the fact that he is the Christ; our life and our state of life must proclaim him, our courage and daring must announce him, our commitment to co-responsibility between pastors and lay faithful must demonstrate him, our passion to follow the Crucified One must bear witness to his resurrection from the dead.

Dear friends, Jesus Christ brings to earth the colours of the Holy Trinity, all the luminous shades of incarnate Love, the rainbow of the Church for a land beset by a new flood of iron and fire.

Let us all be at our post on this Ark of the Covenant, reconciled and mobilised for the battle of love; let us build together a more synodal Church in a world thirsting for hope, thanks to the divine-human colours of ecclesial communion, the Rainbow of the New Covenant. Amen!