

## Scripture Reflection: March, 2025: St. Luke during Lent

While on retreat with students at Taizé, one year stands out above all others. We were in the middle of the week of Pentecost when a few large coaches from Poland arrived. We were all shocked. Poland had just come out of many years of hardship and religious persecution from the Communist overlords and the Catholic community had really suffered. Their churches were desecrated in many ways: turning them into public urinals, or using them for warehouses. Priests were not allowed to be trained and people were not allowed to practise their religion. They had suffered great economic poverty, yet as soon as they gained independence (thanks in no small part to the intervention of Pope John Paul 1) these people had come to celebrate and participate in the budding ecumenical centre of Taizé. It must have cost them dearly to do the long journey from Poland, but their first thoughts were to embrace Christianity in its freedom, fullness and in brotherhood with all Christians, not only the Catholic community.

In the week following we learned in the afternoon discussion groups and through the animators and translators what life had been like for them. The young students, from the relative affluence of the North West of England, had a glimpse of what it was like to be a suppressed people.

In Luke's gospel we get a feel of what it must have been like for him. He had come from a relatively wealthy background in Ancient Syria and was educated in Greek philosophy and medicine. He finds himself in Judea in the midst of a population under foreign domination suffering religious and economic difficulties. The new movement of "the Way" as Christianity was called then, was taking hold on huge numbers of the population and the charismatic figure of Jesus was giving people a new reason to live and hope for a future that was filled with a confidence in a God of love, mercy and generosity. From Luke's educated background, his reaction was to record Jesus' words and actions in writing. He knew the power of writing to communicate to future generations from his study of the ancient Greeks; Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. His gospel was re-written and further distributed throughout the various communities of the Roman Empire. Its stress on the special place of the outsiders of society resonated with the majority of the population of that time.

Luke records the prayer of Jesus. Have you noticed that after calling our minds to God as father, the next part of the prayer is for "daily bread"? That was/is the first daily prayer of the destitute on waking. Lk 11: 1-5.

During Lent, a scriptural reflection could centre on Jesus' prayer said slowly and thoughtfully.

"There is nothing evil save that which perverts the mind and shackles the conscience"



St Ambrose:  
Early mosaic.



In Luke's gospel Jesus teaches the people on the flat land so it has the title "Sermon on the Plain"

"It is not from your own that you give to the beggar; it is a portion of his own that you are restoring to him" St Ambrose of Milan. (390 A.D.)

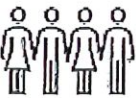


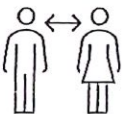




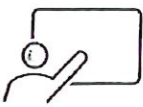
# Archdiocesan Synodal Council | Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Recently, 115 people from across the Archdiocese (including the Isle of Man) met at St Margaret Clitherow Centre for the second annual Archdiocesan Synodal Council. In attendance were representatives from each of our 13 Deanery Synodal Councils and other representatives from diocesan groups and ecumenical observers.

During the morning, strategic actions derived from each of the six development areas of the Pastoral Plan were discussed and feedback was taken from each table. Later in the day, questions submitted by each Deanery Synodal Council were discussed and feedback given. Below is a summary of the major points taken away from the day, which will be stored in our hearts and minds in our future work.

## The Major Points in Summary

It was encouraging that all those present were committed to embedding **synodality** within the Archdiocese as a way of communicating and working together. The sense of energy and passion was tangible throughout the day.

	<p><b>Accompaniment</b> There were many questions about the term accompaniment used in the first development area in the Pastoral Plan. What does this term actually mean and what does it look like in the reality of our communities?</p>
	<p><b>Communication</b> A clear desire for all channels of communication to be reviewed: those between both Synodal Councils and Family of Parishes; those coming from and to central Archdiocesan departments (including website, social media etc.) and transparency in all parts of Archdiocesan life (including finance).</p>
	<p><b>Youth/Young Adults</b> This was seen by many as an urgent issue for the future of our Archdiocese. Everyone was encouraged to know that the recruitment of a Youth Coordinator is currently in process to support the church of the future.</p>
	<p><b>Engagement</b> There were concerns about how the laity and clergy can be engaged fully, particularly those who may have not heard the message, or those who are not yet willing to engage with the process for whatever reason.</p>
	<p><b>Clergy Support</b> There was a sense of responsibility to ensure our priests are supported through accompaniment and training, during what may be a huge period of change. Priests need access to individualised holistic health and wellbeing as they support and facilitate our journey to become a Synodal church.</p>
	<p><b>Strategic action</b> What are the concrete steps necessary to enable action, particularly in relation to our resources at local parish level. There is a thirst for this to be a synodal process with a clear set of criteria in decision making.</p>
	<p><b>Clarification</b> There was a desire to have the remits of the Archdiocesan Synodal Council, Deanery Synodal Council and Families of Parishes clarified and their relationship with one another further defined.</p>
	<p><b>Synodality at local level</b> As our synodal church develops (through the councils etc.) there is a need to ensure that working synodally is strengthened at a local level within our parishes and Family of Parishes.</p>
	<p><b>Formation and Training</b> Many asked for formation and training to be developed: formation to convert hearts and minds so that we are a vibrant church fit for our future mission; and training so that those involved in leadership, catechesis and ministry truly live out, with confidence, their vocation as a baptised member of the church.</p>



*Be assured that all these points will remain at the forefront of our minds. There are many plans and strategic steps either in the pipeline or being actioned. As we have 'good news' to share we will ensure this happens...*

**Becoming the Church God is calling us to be**