

living City

Synodality

An Ancient Tradition
for Today's Church

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Starring Maggie Smith, plus an exclusive
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Letter From the Editor



We're glad you are here. As you can see on the cover, "Synodality" is our theme, and we come to this from the charism of the Work of Mary (Focolare), seeking unity.

A couple years ago, before giving a parish retreat I spent an evening with the religious education director, some other staff, and their pastor. With us around the table at dinner that night was a high school student, who also was an engaged Roman Catholic, with many questions. At one point this boy asked the table, "Why do you think so many people are leaving the church today?"

Right away, the pastor replied rather matter-of-factly: "Individualism. People don't like being told what to do, or think, so unfortunately, they go their own way."

Despite being the guest that night, after a few minutes of conversation around this, I found myself unable to keep my mouth shut. At the last moment, before it seemed that the high schooler was about to ask another question of the group, I piped up.

I said something to the effect that I believe we in the Church have, in fact, given people many reasons to leave. "We've hurt a lot of people," I said, "and we haven't listened to them very well, either." I added, "I think the responsibility is mostly on us."

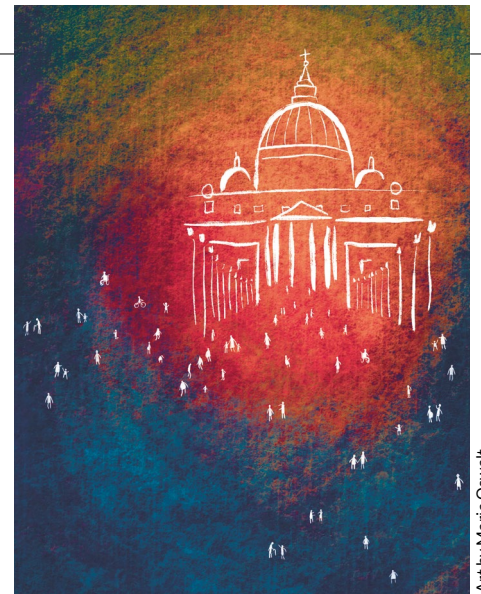
It is in that same spirit that I feel the listening, humility, and posture of synodality is long overdue—not necessarily for a theme of *Living City* (who even knew or used the word a decade ago?!)—but for the Roman Catholic Church, of which I know many or most of you are a part.

So to synodality we turn, and we haven't brought you only Catholic perspectives, but also an insightful, ecumenical glimpse of how this work has been essential for centuries in the Orthodox Churches.

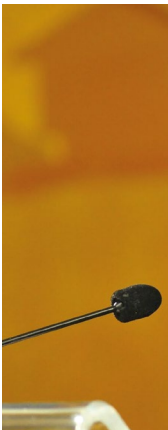
Unrelated to all of this, let me mention that we were humbled to receive an award in June from the Catholic Media Association in the category of "Magazine of the Year—National General Interest Magazines." Our friends at *U.S. Catholic*, *America Magazine*, and *Columbia* (the magazine of the Knights of Columbus) received first, second, and third place prizes. With our friends at *St. Anthony Messenger*, we received honorable mention. For this and more we are grateful to the CMA, and for all who work in the fields of engaged Catholic journalism, communications, and social media.

Oh, and don't miss the interview I conducted with the director of the new film, *The Miracle Club*. It's fun.

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Art by Maria Oswald





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