Topic: **Shared Responsibility and Lay Leadership: My Experience as Laiko President**
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Serving as Laiko President has been a journey of faith, service, and shared responsibility. It has taught me that leadership in the Church is not primarily about authority or position but about **listening, accompanying others, and discerning** together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Final Document of the Synod on Synodality has provided a valuable framework for this understanding of leadership.

At the heart of synodality is our common baptismal identity. Through Baptism, we belong to Christ, are called to holiness, and share in the Church's mission. This conviction grounded my leadership and reminded me that lay service must remain Christ-centered and directed toward the Church's good.

The Synod calls for greater participation of laymen and laywomen in **ecclesial discernment and every phase of decision-making** (FD 77). Laypeople are not merely assistants or recipients of pastoral programs. Through their charisms, professional competence, and lived experience, they participate actively in the Church's life and mission.

I experienced this while working with the Laiko Board, whose members came from different professions, ministries, organizations, and areas of public service. Their diverse gifts and perspectives reflected the Church's richness. Our differences also required patience, humility, respect, and openness to dialogue. I learned that unity does not require everyone to have the same opinion. It grows when people listen respectfully, speak honestly, and remain open to the Holy Spirit.

As president, my role was not simply to present my own ideas but to create an environment in which members felt respected and encouraged to participate. This reflects differentiated co-responsibility, which values each person's gifts in relation to the community's shared mission (FD 89).

Guided by the Synod's description of decision-making as a **"joint exercise of discernment, consultation and co-operation"** (FD 90), we made our discussions and program planning participatory. We listened to different perspectives, considered our member organizations' needs, and worked toward decisions that served our common mission.

I also learned that participation **requires responsibility and accountability**. Leaders must clearly present the issues and provide the information necessary for **meaningful consultation**. Those consulted must contribute honestly and with an informed conscience (FD 93). The community must then implement and evaluate decisions with continued participation so synodality becomes a concrete reality (FD 94).

Shared responsibility was also evident in our commitment to lay formation rooted in Scripture, Church teaching, prayer, and social responsibility. We encouraged laypeople to recognize their families, workplaces, professions, and communities as places of mission. Through **a space for listening and dialogue** with the wider society, laypeople bring Gospel values into the world (FD 127).

Serving as Laiko President has deepened my faith and understanding of leadership. Through **continuing formation, prayerful listening**, **participatory discernment**, and **shared responsibility**, we can build a truly synodal Church in which every gift is valued and all the baptized participate in Christ's mission. May we continue this path with fidelity, humility, and hope.