



FRIENDS

The Missionary Society of St. James
the Apostle

March 2025



"How Can We Know the Way..."

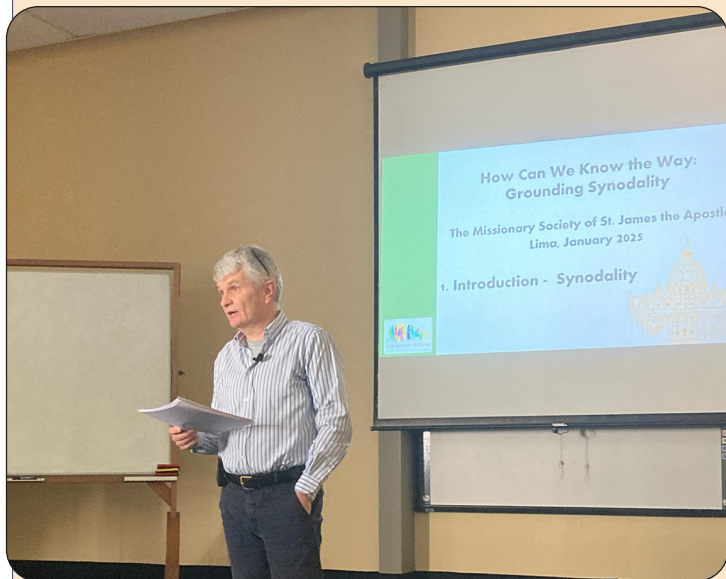
Dear Friends,

We gathered for the Society's Annual General Meeting in mid-January and once again, it was an event filled with joy, thanksgiving, and a unique camaraderie as current members and alumni from different parts of the world gathered at the mission center house, on the outskirts of Lima, Perú. We joined together to thank God for all of our blessings including our mission, each other and our benefactors. Administrative and financial issues were considered, and gratitude was expressed for all prayers, donations and bequests. Missionary challenges were also debated, and members had the opportunity to listen to the keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Éamonn Fitzgibbon.

Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor in Latin America since 1958.



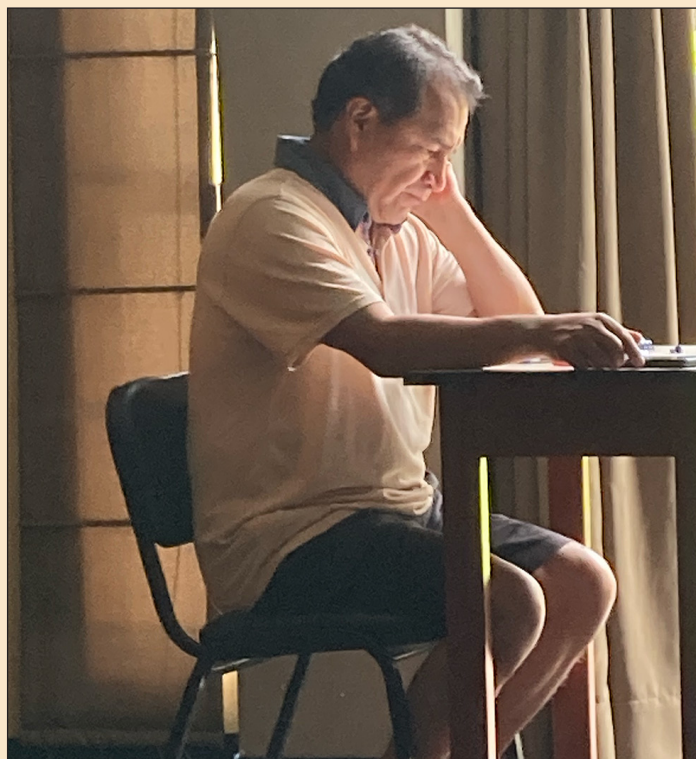
Éamonn is an Irish theologian and university professor, who is the Director of the Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, Ireland. He is also the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral planning in his home diocese of Limerick. Éamonn is currently the convener of the Task Group for the Irish Synodal Pathway of the Irish Episcopal Conference. Éamonn has become an authoritative commentator and contributor to the process of synodality in the Church in Ireland



Rev. Dr. Éamonn Fitzgibbon speaking at the AGM

and further afield. The theme of the jubilee year, 2025, is *"To become pilgrims of hope"* and this was the backdrop to the challenges that Éamonn presented to us during our annual meeting, with a theme of "How Can We Know the Way". Accepting that Christianity no longer underpins modern day culture as its common language, we were challenged to consider how the Spirit of God is inviting us to something new, and to become risk-taking, courageous pilgrims, confident that the Lord is always at our side, accompanying us, and drawing us beyond shallow or stagnant waters into the deep. Can we see the synodal path envisioned by Pope Francis as a reflection and expansion of the vision of Vatican II....a community of the baptized who share in the priestly and prophetic ministry of Jesus, travelling together, led by the Holy Spirit, and "oxygenating" the Church with new life in the third millennium? This synodal path before us, Éamonn emphasized, is as old as the early Church Council of Jerusalem when the first disciples tackled the issue of how to welcome and include gentiles; how to bring them into the believing fraternity inspired by the resurrection of Jesus.

At that time the movement was called "The Way", and we were invited by Éamonn to consider how can we know the way, that way from the past which inspired so many to live in a radical communion of sharing and caring for one another. It is now leading us on, in a different time and a different cultural space. Is there a quiet revolution going on in the Church which is leading us gradually towards a new Pentecost?





The Bishops celebrating Mass at the Annual General Meeting

The spirit of Vatican II calls us to be an apostolic body, always building and renewing itself, listening to each other under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even when we do not always think or feel the same way. Pope Francis asks us to keep our ear to the ground, to inform ourselves of the diverse forces and experiences which affect the lives of people in the neighborhood around us and to be sensitive and ready and capable of responding to their changing needs. In this context, Éamonn highlighted how the prophets and the psalms remind us that the Lord, who allied himself to the slaves in Egypt, always hears the “cries of the poor”. This is at the heart of the St James missionary enterprise: to build up the most vulnerable members of society, and to welcome them into the life and vision of a fraternal Church.



The image of Jesus dying on the cross, making himself the most vulnerable of all to the pains of life, tells us something so important: that both Jesus and the Father were prepared to suffer for the project of salvation and that we, as disciples, are likewise called to take pains and to risk ourselves more in helping and encouraging the most marginalized. That is the ethical response of love to human necessity preached by Jesus in the Beatitudes. As Pope Francis reminded us in his writings in *Fratelli Tutti*, we cannot pass people by at a safe distance with a nervous indifference like the priest and levite in the story of the Good Samaritan. Instead, we must be willing to take risks to encounter others in their diversity even when we are uncomfortable, for no one is beyond the scope of our pastoral interest and love.



In this Jubilee year, may we recognize that we all share in human vulnerability and fragility. May we allow others' pains to draw us out of our own preoccupations so that we have the courage to imitate the responsive heart of Jesus, who is the “Good Samaritan” who never closes his eyes or ears to anyone's wounds. May the path ahead for the Church in our mission here in South America and in your mission at home, draw us into a common bond, a pilgrim people walking in hope as the Holy Spirit gradually opens new life-enhancing horizons before us.

~ Fr. Simon Cadwallader

JUBILEE YEAR PRAYER

*Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.*

*May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the
Gospel.*

*May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.*

*May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.*

*May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.*

*To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.*

Amen

~Pope Francis~



Frs. Gabe Troy and David Costello



Frs. Roger Clarke and Pat Universal

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello, Director



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