

***Our Shifting Church* — English journalist, Austin Ivereigh, reports on the Synod on Synodality in THE TABLET, October 3, 2024.**

“The *Instrumentum Laboris* (working document) names a number of the signs of the times that have surfaced on the Synod journey. One is the way our ecclesial belonging has shifted.

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A community of faith today is not just a geographical place: we are mobile, urban creatures, who might belong at the same time to different countries as well as church movements or societies; and we increasingly spend much of our lives in a parallel digital, virtual world.

This reality “challenges the Church’s organisational forms,” notes the IL (82), for so many of our structures assume a notion of place that has been in practice superseded. Without forgetting the importance of physical context and concrete culture, we need to start seeing the Church not just as spaces but “environments and networks in which relationships can develop, offering people rootedness and a basis for mission, which they will carry out wherever their lives unfold” (86).

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This suggests more investment in “centres” of spirituality and formation, from where – as in the Early Church — we radiate out. The call for formation has been widespread and insistent from the start of this Synod journey:

**in understanding how the Spirit guides the Church;
in listening and group discernment;
in how to include the poor and those on the periphery;
in formation of faith witnesses and for preaching;
in listening to the Word of God, and the voice of God in Creation... (51-66).**

All this will require a major mobilisation of church resources: away from maintaining buildings, and towards such centres and networks.