***In these words of Pope Francis he explores what it means to be Church. A few lines from these could be used in your parish newsletter, before the dismissal on Synod Sunday, or they could form part of your Synod Sunday display.***

Mass for Synod Sunday – Words of Pope Francis

 “The Church’s mission in the world proceeds through the contribution of all those who are part of her. Some think there are bosses in the Church: the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and then there are the others. No: the Church is all of us! And we all have the responsibility to sanctify one another, to take care of the others.

The Church is all of us. Each one has his or her work in the Church, but she is all of us. Indeed, we should think of the Church as a living organism, made up of people we know and with whom we journey, and not as an abstract and distant reality.

The Church is we who are journeying; the Church is we who are here today. We: this is the Church.”

*General Audience, 6 June 2018*

“The thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. ... And you have to start from the ground up.”

*Interview with Fr Antonio Spadaro SJ, August 2013*

“How are we treating the people of God? I dream of a Church that is a mother and shepherdess. The Church’s ministers must be merciful, take responsibility for the people and accompany them like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbour. This is pure Gospel. God is greater than sin. The structural and organisational reforms are secondary – that is, they come afterward. The first reform must be the attitude.

Mass for Synod Sunday – Words of Pope Francis

The ministers of the Gospel must be people who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, who know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into their people’s night, into the darkness, but without getting lost.

The people of God want pastors, not clergy acting like bureaucrats or government officials. The bishops, particularly, must be able to support the movements of God among their people with patience, so that no one is left behind. But they must also be able to accompany the flock that has a flair for finding new paths.

“Instead of being just a Church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a Church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage.”

*Interview with Fr Antonio Spadaro SJ, August 2013*