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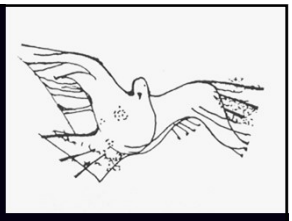
Reading the Signs of the Times:

A Synodal Journey through Conversations in the Spirit



… one step further:

From Inspiration to conspiration

=> “Veni creator Spiritus…”

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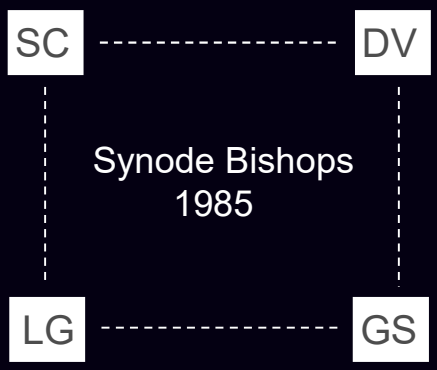
1. Vatican II: World Mission of the Church
2. Worker Priests: Tracing Vatican II back
3. Signs of the Times: Doing Synodality

► Starting point:
Vatican II, this morning



The Church (LG) — celebrates the mysteries of Christ (SC) — under the guidance of the Word of God (DV) — for the salvation of the world (GS).

The Church (LG) — serves the salvation of the world (GS) — through the mysteries of Christ (SC) — under the guidance of the Word of God (DV).

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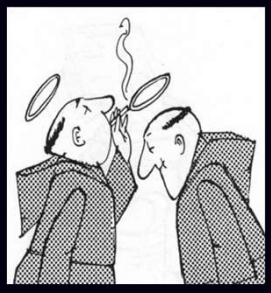
"We set out with a clear vision of what we had to offer the world, and we discovered that we were latecomers who had to learn everything from scratch. [...] We looked for spaces in the gaps where we might fit our cause, and we discovered a world so full that it forced us to question our beliefs […]."

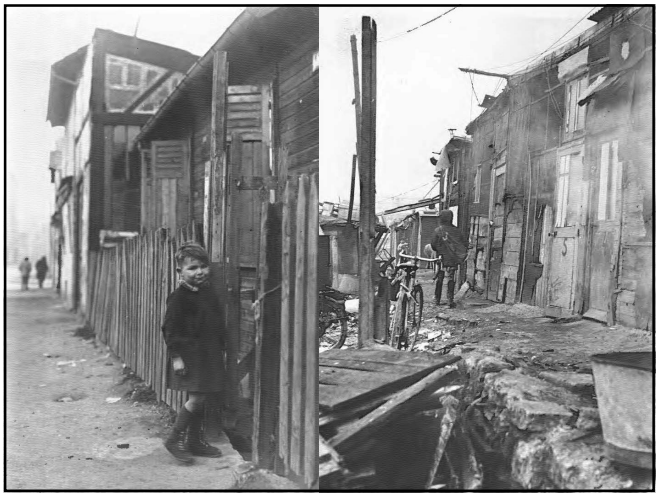


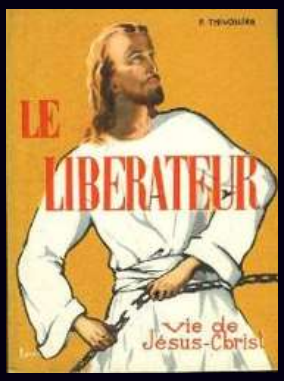
A new understanding of the Church's world mission:

It was not the worker-priests who converted the workers to the Church, but rather the workers who converted the worker-priests to the Gospel.

Mission is the Church's self-transcendence toward its ever-greater God (Leonardo Boff: "God comes before the missionary").

God inscribes the signs of salvation into the world's history of disaster – and people "are the words with which he tells his stories" (Edward Schillebeeckx).





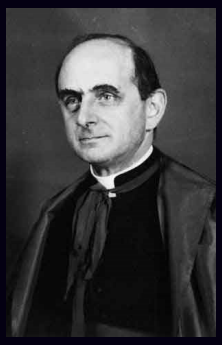
"Thank you, Lord, thank you! Thank you for everything I've seen, heard, and received today. Thank you for everything that woke me up, for the soap that smells so good, for the refreshing toothpaste. Thank you for the newspaper that arrived on time and for the exciting story inside. Thank you for Jacques, who lent me his nail file, for Frédéric, who gave me a cigarette […]. Thank you for the food that has strengthened me, for the glass of beer that quenched my thirst a little while ago."

"Thanks for the motorcycle that took me where I wanted to go. Thanks for the girls I met, for the lipstick on Marie-Therese's lips—she chose the color wisely—for Monique's hairstyle, which suits her so well, for Anne-Marie's funny face and her liberating laugh. [...] Thank you for life. Thank you for grace. […]. Thank you, Lord. Thank you."

1954: Ban on the French Worker Priests

“Father X celebrated Mass in overalls. Instead of saying Dominus vobiscum, Father Y greeted the congregation with ‘Salut, les copains’ (‘Hello, everyone’). Father Z translated Ite missa est as ‘Come on, the world’s Mass is about to begin.’”

… a Church thriller with a happy ending



PO: Prêtre-ouvriers

PO: Presbyterorum ordinis

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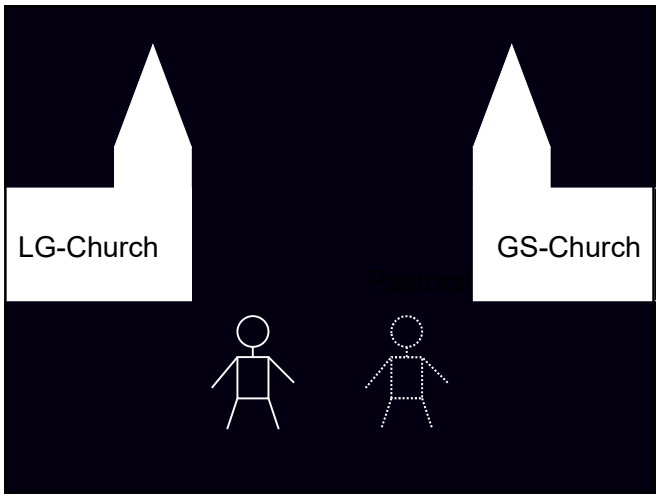
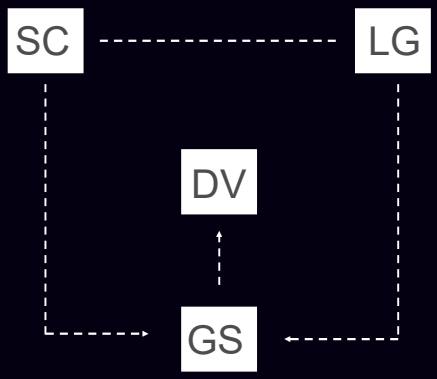
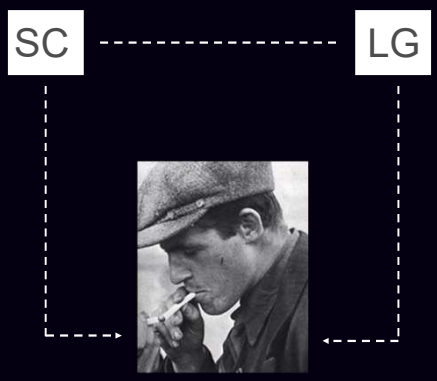
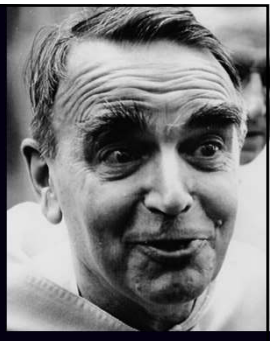


… reception of Vatican II
in many European countries



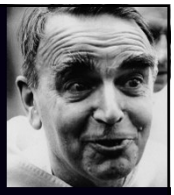




M.-Dominique Chenu OP
(1895-1990)

“Signs of the times are [...] general phenomena that [...] express the longings of contemporary humanity. These are [...] true signs only through that transcendence which they carriy [...] into the continuity of human conceptions of time.”

“The times provide [the Church] […] with […] signs of the Gospel’s coherence with the hope of humanity. May […] Christians […] perceive God’s signs of the times, which he inscribes into secular reality. They will […] experience the happy surprise […], that one can encounter grace at work among non-Christians. For the relevance of the Gospel is demonstrated by the problems of humanity.”



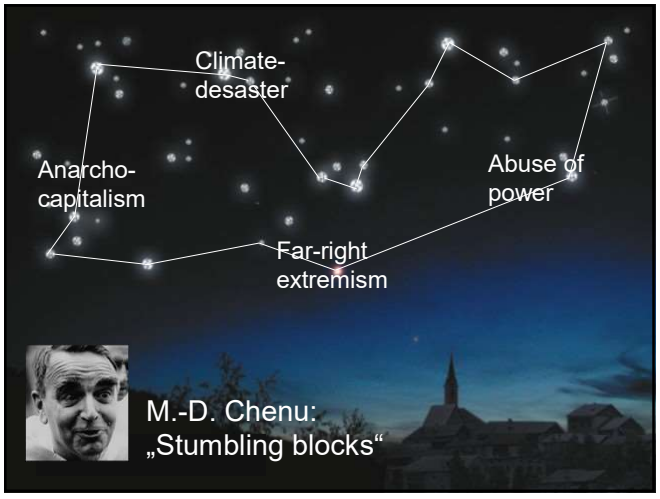
“The Council offers […] a plan of action for Christians today: […] to discern the signs of the times. […] The People of God strive to discern, in current events, the needs […] of our time. To do this, they must be in the midst of […] other people, both believers and non-believers.”

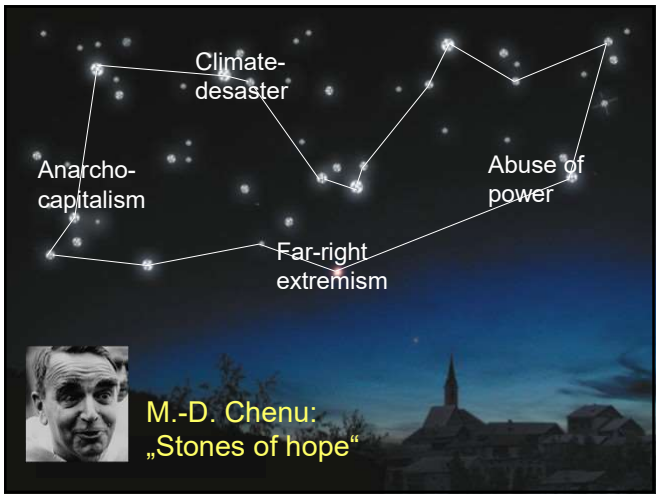
„In order to fulfill its mission, the Church has the duty to discern the signs of the times [signa temporum perscrutandi] and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel [sub luce evangelii interpretandi], so that it […] may respond to the questions of the people […].” (GS 4).

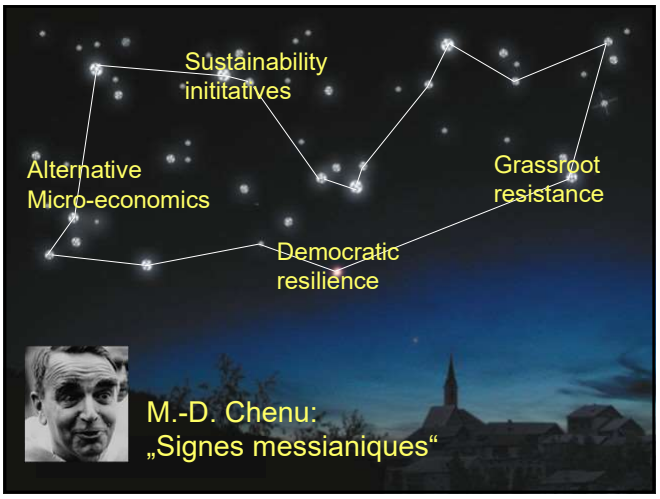
„The People of God strive to discern, within the events, needs, and desires they share with the rest of humanity in our time, what are the true signs of God’s presence […]” (GS 11).

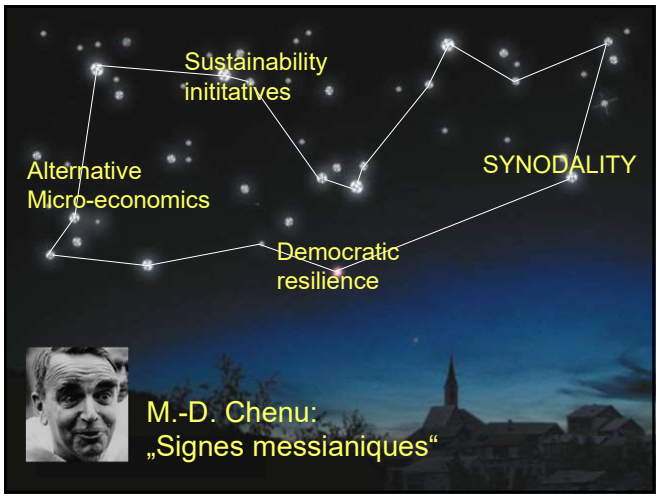
► The Necessity of synodal Discernment

► The signs of the times can be both good and evil







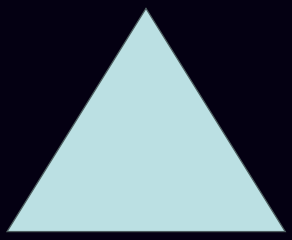


► Synodality =
a sign of our times

► Synodality

= the fruit of a reading the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel

Sexual abuse



Clericalism

Pope Francis “To say ‘no’ to abuse is to say an emphatic ‘no’ to all forms of clericalism.”

Sexual abuse

Clericalism Synodality

“Only dialogue can make us grow. In fact, listening and abandoning preconceptions are a powerful antidote to the danger of clericalism […].”

„The Synod can help us to turn a clerical church into a synodal church.“

Doing synodality:

Reading the signs of the Times?

Practical Rules:

- No “whataboutism”
- No concurrence of victims
- No glossing over ambivalence

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
SOCIETY		
CHURCH		