

# Honesty, gratitude to God are basis of credibility, cardinal tells synod

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Unless they recognize themselves as sinners rescued by Jesus, adults cannot be effective in helping young people find the path to faith and doing God's will, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago told the Synod of Bishops.

"We must always keep fresh in our minds our own story of how Christ, the good Samaritan, did not pass by, but poured his oil of tenderness in our wounds, lifted us up, redeemed what was unredeemable on our own and opened for us a new future," the cardinal told the synod Oct. 10.

As synod members began their second week of meetings, their speeches in the general sessions focused on the section of the synod working document dealing with "vocational discernment" and "the art of accompanying."

Cardinal Cupich quoted the working document's assertion that "for young people, it is particularly important that mentors recognize their own humanity and fallibility."

The parable of the good Samaritan was the Gospel reading for Oct. 8, he noted, and the early Christian writers read it as a story of each person's redemption. Pope Francis made the same point in his homily at his early morning Mass that day.

Sermons by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine all gave sermons where the Samaritan was not first "an example to imitate," but rather was an image of Jesus, who "who saved us, you and me, and only then from that experience are we called to do likewise."

For centuries, he said, Christians read the story in this way: "The wounded man found in a ditch is Adam, fallen by sin, left to die outside the gates of Eden. The priest and the Levite, representing the law, are unable to do anything for him. Only a foreigner, Jesus, one who is not one of us, who is not from here, can help."

The point of such a reading, Cardinal Cupich said, is that "before any of us can become a disciple or teach others to be one, each of us must recognize Jesus as the

one who entered my history, my chaos, my vulnerability, my woundedness and saved me.”

“If we are to be the kind of mentors young people are telling us they need,” Cardinal Cupich told the synod, “we must never forget our history of weakness, failure, sinfulness, the times we have been in the ditch.”

Young people can sense when a person’s life and the advice he or she offers comes from experience, he said, but being in touch with that experience also helps the person who is supposed to be a spiritual mentor, guide or director.

“The more we honestly are in touch with the concrete circumstances of our own history,” he said, “the greater will be our openness to see the real and possible steps that the Lord is asking in every moment of those we accompany.”

“Brothers,” he told the synod, “let us never be afraid to remember the times we were in the ditch.”

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