**Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future**



**by Pope Francis and Austen Ivereigh**

**Book Review by Margaret Magee OSF**

The American Psychological Association published an article on September 25, 2020 entitled COVID-19 Spurs Anxious, Upsetting Dreams. It stated, “The anxiety, stress and worry brought on by COVID-19 is not limited to daytime hours. The pandemic is affecting our dreams as well, infusing more anxiety and negative emotions into dreams and spurring dreams about the virus itself, particularly among women.” Dreaming is essential to our mental, spiritual and emotional health. Dreams, it is believed, help us to process the events of the day, resolve problems and deal with life’s situations and challenges. Dreams may enhance creativity and assist in seeing broader possibilities for the future.

In light of this scientific insight, it is truly a gift that the newest book by Pope Francis and his biographer Austen Ivereigh is a call and invitation to dream a path to a better future. In his down-to-earth manner, Francis shares three critical events in his own life and how those challenged him to think and respond differently and with more compassion.

Of great interest to me is how Pope Francis describes the process of the synod. The word synod means “walking together” and requires deep and open discernment. This spoke to me of the communal discernment process that we are using in our Assemblies and in preparation for Chapter. Read the following quote replacing the words “synodal” and “Synod” with the words communal discernment.

“What characterizes a synodal path is the role of the Holy Spirit. We listen, we discuss in groups, but above all we pay attention to what the Spirit has to say to us. That is why I ask everyone to speak frankly and to listen carefully to others because, there, too, the Spirit is speaking. Open to changes and new possibilities, the Synod is for everyone an experience of conversion. Hence one of the changes in the process: periods of silence between speeches to allow those in attendance to be better aware of the motions of the Spirit.”

Francis’ writing and his call to communal discernment is to recognize our shared journey and commitment to live our mission and charism as sisters and associates together. To know ourselves, though separated in this Covid lockdown, yet always united in our commitment to live and witness to the gospel and to be the presence of Christ in and for our world today.

*Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* is an excellent reflection not only for our Chapter preparation but also for engaging, imagining and working together to create a future guided by the Spirit. Pope Francis calls us to renew our communal desire to live life generously and abundantly to ensure the generativity and the enduring spirit of our Franciscan charism.