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♦ Synod14 - 5a Congregazione generale: Omelia di S.E. Mons. Philip Tartaglia, Arcivescovo di Glasgow (Scozia, GB) durante la preghiera dell'Ora Terza

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*Questa mattina alle ore 9, con il canto dell'Ora Terza, si è aperta nell'Aula del Sinodo in Vaticano la quinta Congregazione generale del Sinodo straordinario sulla famiglia.*
*Di seguito riportiamo l'omelia che S.E. Mons. Philip Tartaglia, Arcivescovo di Glasgow (Scozia, Gran Bretagna), ha tenuto durante la preghiera dell'Ora Terza:*

Omelia di S.E. Mons. Philip Tartaglia

Recently in Scotland, we had an independence referendum. It was a simple choice - Yes or No. In the end, the majority did not choose independence and voted to stay within the United Kingdom.

The pre-referendum debate was absorbing, passionate and partisan. Engagement with the issues was intense. 85% of the electorate cast a vote. The referendum divided cities, towns, neighbourhoods, families and friends, even husbands and wives! There were meetings and rallies, and cards and posters everywhere advocating Yes or No.

Would we ever come together again after this? Could there possibly be unity again in the country? Would communities and families and friends be able to reconcile their differences?

A photograph which was posted on social media caught the imagination. It was of two family homes side by side somewhere in Scotland. One displayed a Yes sign and the other displayed a No sign. And the remarkable thing

was that in-between the two residences, there was a third sign, which read: We love our neighbour. It was a delightful image, and powerful too, which pierced the tension of the situation with typical Scottish humour.

"Love is always patient and kind…love is never rude or selfish", St Paul teaches us in today's text. Paul speaks passionately and eloquently about love. There is nothing dis-enagaged about this love. Love always has to reach in to the realities, the practicalities, the sometimes messy circumstances of real life, family, friendship, work, and politics. "Love is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes" says our text. And in the ups and downs of real life, there can be so much to excuse, so much need for trust, and so often there is much to endure.

The choice of readings for weddings includes this text. Preparing for their wedding, spouses read it and think, "That's so beautiful. I want my love, our love, to be like that, patient, and kind, trusting, enduring, faithful, lasting for ever."

And when husband and wife are happy together and are blessed with children, then love expands from two to three and four and five. In a family, there is every opportunity to be patient and kind and excusing and trusting. There is every opportunity to renew faithfulness to one another by laughing together, crying together, supporting one another, saying sorry to one another, giving one another the benefit of the doubt, embracing one another, being happy for each other, just knowing the right word at the right time. And when those things happen, we are privileged to behold the beauty and simplicity and strength of married love and of family love, a love which truly through the grace of Christ endures all things.

But when families fracture, love is the first casualty.  The love which was the glue between spouses turns to hate very quickly. Intimate communion of life is replaced with a terrible logic of division. Children's peace of heart is shattered and they find themselves both loving and hating their parents at the same time.

Into this sadness, the Church has to find a way to speak St Paul's words of love, which compassionately excuse and forgive, but which also heal and renew and lift up again; where forgiveness is not accommodation or indifference but genuine and sometimes hard-won reconciliation, engendering new trust, new hope, new endurance, and new faithfulness, a new page in the story of love of husband and wife and their children.

St Paul's inspiring words on love that we have heard today mean that we must have compassion for the pain and laceration of the human hearts caught up in separation, betrayal and divorce. St Paul's words encourage us to find a way to uphold God's holy purpose in marriage and in the family while also upholding those for whom that purpose has become almost impossible to attain. In times of distress and misfortune, people still instinctively turn to the Church for hope and consolation and inspiration. We must not fail them.

On the cross, Jesus suffered patiently, he excused his executioners, he trusted the Father, and he opened his arms to embrace and welcome all sinners and all those who are in pain and anguish. In this sacred mission of divine love, Jesus calls us to follow him.

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