"A time of mercy"

Perhaps more than any other reason, Pope Francis called two worldwide meetings of Catholic bishops in 2014 and 2015 to show families globally that the Church wants to journey with them in both their joys and struggles.

In fact, in a landmark speech during the synod of Bishops October 4-25, 2015, the pontiff called for a Church where everyone is always "walking together laity, pastors, the bishop of Rome."

"The journey of synodality is the journey that God wants from his Church in the third millennium," the pope said October 17, 2015, speaking in a Vatican ceremony marking the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the synod by Pope Paul VI.

"A synodal Church is a listening Church, aware that listening is more than hearing," said Francis. "It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn. We must continue on this path. The world in which we live and which are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, requires from the Chuch the strengthening of synergies in all areas of its mission."...

"A faith that does not know how to root itself in the life of people remains arid and, rather than oases, creates other deserts," he said.

Francis said Christians are called to act like Jesus did with Bartimaeus. "Jesus' disciples are called to this, even today, especially today: to bring people into contact with the compassionate mercy that saves," said the pontiff. "When humanity's cry, like Bartimaeus', becomes stronger still, there is no other response than to make Jesus' words our own and, above all, imitate his heart.

"Moments of suffering and conflict are for God occasions of mercy," said the pope. "Today is a time of mercy!"

Taken from <u>10 Things Pope Francis Wants You to Know About the Family</u>, by Joshua J. McElwee (Liguori Publications, 2016), pages 41 and 44.

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recitation of the
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