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世界主教代表會議 總祕書處

新聞稿，2023年12月12日

## 如何成為傳教性的共議性的教會？

新聞主旨：準備2024年大會的〈工作指南〉

2023年12月5日，在世界主教代表會議常務理事會的會議結束時，理事會的成員通過了一份文件，該文件闡明教會在第十六屆世界主教代表常務會議大會第二會期（2024年10月）之前將要進行的工作。

這些〈工作指南〉提供一具體的路線圖——始於在第十六屆主教議會第一會期結束時通過的《綜合報告》——旨在邀請每一個地方教會團體，深化共議性的角度並擴大共議性的經驗，藉此去思考代表作為地方教會基石的內容。正如教宗方濟各在批核這些工作時所回顧的所說那樣：「世界主教代表會議是同道偕行，不是關於這個或那個主題……。重要的是如何進行反思，即以共議性的方式進行。」

世界主教代表會議祕書長格雷奇（Mario Grech）樞機表示：「根據[去年]10月大會的經驗，特別是根據大會成員批准的《綜合報告》，常務理事會規劃了一條**統一但有差異化的途徑**，而這途徑是視乎地方教會的現實情況和能力來決定的。」格雷奇樞機補充說：「這已經是教會的一種共議性的工作方式，每個人都根據自己的使命為全體的利益而合作。」

事實上，**各教區**被要求同時考慮兩個主要主題或指南：

1.就「深化」而言：促進一種反思，聚焦於所有天主子民在**傳教使命中差異化的共同責任**（differentiated co-responsibility）（參閱《綜合報告》，第8~12、16、18章）。這要求地方教會作進一步的諮詢，讓在天主子民——表達各種經驗、技能、神恩、職務以及個人和團體觀點的**本堂神父、參與群體、共議性的團隊**等——參與其中。在「如何」成為一個共議性的教會這方面，他們的觀點特別有幫助。由此可見，該領域的**專家和學術機構**的參與似乎是必不可少的。這樣，**神學和教會法專家以及相關人文和社會科學的貢獻**才能得以體現。

2.就「擴大」共議性的經驗而言：繼續或促進新的倡議，以成為一個傳教使命的共議性的教會，透過培訓和傾聽的經驗，讓那些迄今為止尚未接觸過該進程的人、生活在貧困環境中和社會邊緣的群體，以及不同宗派的基督徒和其他宗教的人也參與其中，且收集並分享見證和傳遞最佳實踐模式，並將之透過各主教團或東方教會組織發送給世界主教議會總祕書處。

為在工作上方便各地方的教會團體，總祕書處準備了一份工作項目表供參考，好使各地方教會團收到[去年]10月世界主教代表會議的成果，並使各地教會團體繼續共議性的轉變旅程。這份工作表可在[www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)上取得。

懇請各主教團和東方天主教會指定有關深入研究的方式和時間，以輔助地方教會的工作；同時也促進他們反思在傳教使命中「差異化的共同責任」，特別是在教會團體（地區、全國、國際）層面，以及不同教會與羅馬主教之間的關係；並綜合地方教會收到和／或在全國性的一些具有洞見的建議，於5月15日之前，將報告連同地方教會收集的最佳實踐模式，一同發送給世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

與此同時，世界主教代表會議總祕書處將推動和促進《綜合報告》中一些「重大」問題的反思，這些問題必須在整個教會層面處理並與羅馬教廷各部會合作。一份提議清單，將以世界主教代表會議的適當方式呈交給教宗。來自各大洲的專家小組，以共議性的方式被召集後，在羅馬教廷相關部會的參與下，就教宗方濟各所指定的提議開展工作。這項工作的進度報告將在2024年10月的第二會期提交。

在所有這些工作中，教宗任命的第十六屆世界主教代表會議常務理事會的成員和所有與會者，將肩負重要任務是，成為他們走過的途徑的大使，並受召成為所屬教會的現實的真正參考點。

（台灣地區主教團祕書處 譯）

## 供參考用的工作項目表

這份工作項目表旨在協助：

1. 各地方教會團體領受[2023]10月世界主教代表會議的成果；
2. 繼續共議性的轉變旅程。

括號中的數字指的是《綜合報告》的章節

### 1. 針對以下目標，可以採取的步驟包括：

#### 1) 傳達[去年]10月大會的經驗

#### 2) 宣傳並深入研究《綜合報告》

#### 3) 廣泛宣傳《致天主子民函》

- 列舉已經完成的事項和尚待完成的事項
- 參與者的見證
- 簡報
- 文章和訪談
- 翻譯文件和發布摘要
- 用於研究《綜合報告》的摘要和工作項目表

## 2.我們在當地可以採取哪些措施，從堂區、教區、國家和大洲等層面，來持續學習（同道偕行）？

- 從《綜合報告》的20個主題中選擇3個優先項目（例如，每部分選一）。
- 從《綜合報告》中各種提議選擇3個在當地立即實施（參閱：可實施的提議）。

## 3.可以作什麼具體的提議，為能在各種會議、聚會（堂區、運動、社區、教區等）和參與性機構中，實際嘗試使用共議性的對話方式中的靈修交談？（2.j）

- 辨識出擁有引導技能的人或組織（2.k）。
- 提供靈修交談、聆聽和辨明的培訓，以及協調人的培訓。

## 4.我們如何能夠讓所有領了洗的人更密切地參與共議性的歷程（1.m），以及如何更好地聆聽那些處於邊緣的人（16）？

- 可以採取哪些具體的舉動來聆聽和諮詢貧困中的人（4）、遷徙者（5和6）、青年和婦女（6）？
- 可以採取哪些具體的步驟來領聽司鐸們並邀請他們參與共議性的經歷（1.n+11）？

## 5.從「尚待審議的事項」中選擇1、2個與當地問題相關的主題，並由一組神學家、教會法學家和教會領導人來進行探討。

## 6.辨識並分享2或3個其他人可能感興趣的當地的資源、倡議或共議性的實踐模式，並將其發送至世界主教會議祕書處的網站：[www.synoderessources.org](http://www.synoderessources.org)。

## 7.在我們的文化背景下如何加深對共議精神的定義與理解？

- 以《綜合報告》第一部分第一章「共議精神：經驗與理解」為起點，從自身背景出發，加深對共議精神的理解，提出符合當地文化的共議性的形象。

## 8.如何在地區層面實施和深化共議性精神層面（3k.l.m）？

- 制定與「共議精神」主題相關的靈修提議。
- 在民間敬禮發展共議性的模式。
- 鼓勵人們透過發展一些靈修建議來為世界主教代表會議祈禱，特別是在四旬期和復活節。

## 9.在領受《綜合報告》並為下一屆會期作出的辨別過程中，讓各個參與機構（委員會）（18）參與。

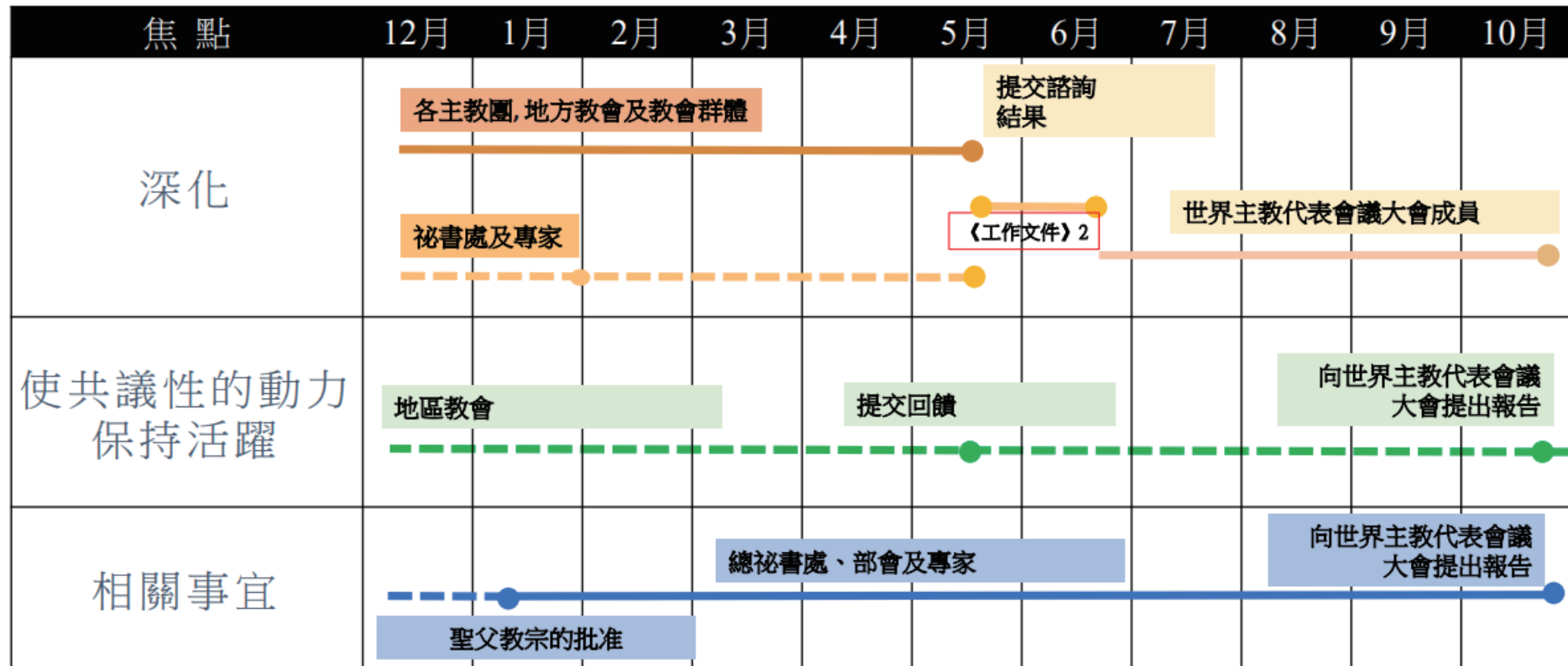
- 根據《綜合報告》（12.k），重新閱讀這些機構中共議精神的具體生活方式（特別是在「參與」和「權柄」這方面）。

## 10.透過培育中心和神學院：

- 實行共議性精神培育的具體措施（14）。
- 組織負責初級和持續培育人員的諮詢（14.o）。
- 研究尚待審議的事項，為準備一些提議，向主教團提出。

（台灣地區主教團祕書處 譯）

## 三個焦點的工作 一目了然





世界主教代表會議 總祕書處

## 如何在傳教使命中成為共議性的教會？

世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議大會

第二會期

五個神學探索的觀點

前言

「與其說教會有個使命，不如肯定地說教會就是使命。『就如父派遣了我，我也同樣派遣你們。』（若廿21）：教會從天父派遣的基督那裡接受了自己的使命。在聖神的支持和引導下，教會向那些不知道或不接受福音的人宣講和見證，並遵循耶穌的根本使命，以窮人為優先。如此，教會就為天國的來臨作出了貢獻，成為『天國在人間的種子和開端』（參閱：《教會》教義憲章，5）」（世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務大會第一會期《綜合報告》，8a）。成長茁壯為共議性的教會，是每一個人、也是所有人一起，共同回應這項召叫和使命的具體方式。

曾出席共議性的會議的弟兄姊妹，特別是參加過第一會期的人，對教會的合一和多元已有具體而真實的經驗。我們的時代充斥著日益嚴重的不平等、兩極化和衝突不斷，縱使如此，在基督內的教會，仍是與天主合一、也與人合一的標誌和工具，這個召叫日益鮮明。教會聆聽聖神的聲音，為聖言作證，懷著信德辨識時代的徵兆，便可以溝通協調整合差異，表達基督奧祕無窮無盡的豐富性。因此，世界主教代表會議在多元中實踐合一的經驗，代表著對很難相信和平與和諧的世界發出先知性的話語。

### 1. 指導性問題

共議性的進程讓我們越來越意識到自己的使命。在第一會期上，這種意識逐漸「具體化」，為第二會期（2024年10月）的發展指明了方向。《邁向2024年10月》（2023年12月11日）的文件解釋，說明在第一和第二會期之間，我們將進入另一個諮詢的時刻，深思以下的問題：**如何才能成為傳教的共議性的教會？**

我們的目標是要找出在不同的背景和環境下所要採取的途徑和工具，以提升每位教友和每個地方教會的創造力，好能執行向當今世界宣講復活的主及其福音的獨特使命。因此，這並不是一個為提升教會結構的效率而將我們侷限在技術上或程序上的改善計畫，而是一個邀請，要我們反思在共議性的教會所特有的合一與多元之間的動力中，我們受召投身於不同傳教形式的承諾。

因此，焦點將是每個人的參與，以我們不同的聖召、神恩和職務，共同參與向世界宣講耶穌基督福音的使命。鑑於教會傳教的轉型，按《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭所載：「新福傳召喚每個受洗者都要作個人的委身」（120），我們承認和促進每位天主子民的特殊神恩對傳教使命的貢獻，並反思信友共同工作和牧者職務權柄之間的關係。在共融和傳教的視野之下，所有人的參與和少數人的權柄之間的動態聯繫，其神學意義、在啟動聯繫的實際做法上及教會法結構的現實中，都會得到深化。我們將從下列三個截然不同但又相互依存的層面：地方教會、團體教會（國家、區域、大洲）、整個教會，進行探索羅馬主教的首席權、普世主教的集體性和教會共議精神的關係。確認這三

個層面可以根據大會第二會期來組織工作，同時牢記它們是三個相互關聯的視角，透過它們來看待合一和有機的現實：傳教的共議性的教會生活。

## 2. 草擬第二會期《工作文件》的步驟

根據指導性的問題，開始啟動新一輪的諮詢進程，此進程的性質與共議性的進程的第一階段有所不同，正如《邁向2024年10月》文件所解釋的，要求各主教團和東方禮教會聖統制組織成為這一部分過程的參考，協調各教區和拜占庭禮教區蒐集資料的工作，並設定方法和時程。他們也要在自己的層面和大洲層面對同一指導性問題進行深入研究，以確認所提的方法與時程適當可行（參閱：1）。主教團、東方禮教會聖統制組織，和不屬於任何主教團的教區，必須蒐集本次的諮詢成果，整理成綜合報告，在2024年5月15日之前送達世界主教代表會議總祕書處，裨益作為起草下一份《工作文件》的基礎。

其他資料將併入綜合報告裡，首先是「世界主教代表會議與堂區司鐸」國際會議（2024年4月28日至5月2日在薩克羅法諾[羅馬]舉行）的結果，該會議係為滿足第一階段及第一會期期間一再表達的需要而召開的，需要聆聽地方教會司鐸們的心聲，並強化他們投身於牧靈職務的經驗，期待他們更深入共議性的進程。

最後，鑑於大會多次要求，並本著《主教共融》宗座憲章第10條的先知精神，由世界主教代表會議總祕書處啟動五個工作小組所進行的神學研究成果，也將納入《工作文件》的材料之內。這五個工作小組將由專家組成，尊重地理分布、性別和教

會條件等所需的多樣性，並以共議性的方式進行研究。特別是其中三個小組主要將聚焦於前述的三個層面（每個層面一個小組），而另外兩個小組則將致力於兩個橫向的軸線，強調該層面彼此之間的相互聯繫和相互依賴，然後根據大綱總結以下段落。

## 3. 有待探索的觀點

### I. 地方教會共議性的傳教面貌

第一會期結束時所批准的《綜合報告》，承認眾人共同的傳教使命「必須成為基督徒團體組織和整個地方教會、所有機構、每個牧靈組織，其所有服務的標準」（《綜合報告》18b）。尋找共議性的教會的傳教面貌和途徑，與每一個地方教會息息相關，在地方教會的構成主體及天主子民的多樣性中，莫忘為福音作見證的任務，這福音藉著共同的洗禮尊嚴，超越基督宗派的歸屬，團結了所有領了洗的人。工作小組會從共議性的教會的角度出發，就地方教會層級的福傳使命，探討以下議題：

- a) 從傳教的角度看，教區主教職務的意義和形式，乃是教會委託給他，作為其個別教會「有形的統一中心和基礎」（《教會》教義憲章，23），特別是與司鐸諮議會、教區各委員會、修會團體和教會團體的關係。（參閱：《綜合報告》12）
- b) 導入某種形式的結構和程序，對教區主教及在地方教會中執行職務者（無論是聖職人員或非聖職人員）的工作表現，定期進行審查，以不同的方式促進所有人的問責文化（對所履行的職務負責）。（參閱：《綜合報告》12j）

- c) 參與組織的風格和運作模式。特別注意決策過程中，諮詢時刻和商議時刻之間的關係（參閱：《綜合報告》18g），如果有些組織或機構還沒有婦女的參與，要確保她們也能夠參與決策過程，並在牧靈關懷和職務上承擔責任。（參閱：《綜合報告》9m）
- d) 已制定的職務和實際運作的事工，其存在與服務有助於以更調和、有效的方式配置地方教會在教區內和不同文化之間的福傳工作，強化平信徒的神恩和角色，以履行教會的使命（參閱：《綜合報告》8d-e），尊重平信徒的特殊性（參閱：《綜合報告》8f），並留意聖化塵世的使命和在教會內執行任務和職務之間的緊張關係（參閱：《綜合報告》8j），同時也考慮建立新職務的可能性。（參閱：《綜合報告》8n、16p）

必須特別留意「承認和重視女性的貢獻，並提高她們在教會生活和傳教使命上的牧靈領導力。為了更加體現所有人的恩寵和神恩，更充分地回應牧靈的需要，教會如何讓更多的女性參與現有的角色和事工？如果需要新的事工，應該由誰來分辨？放在什麼層級？以什麼方式來進行？」（《綜合報告》9i）

## II. 教會群體傳教的共議性的面貌

2015年教宗方濟各在紀念世界主教代表會議成立50週年致詞中申明：「操練共議精神的第二層面就是教省、分區、全區會議，及尤其是主教團」，參閱《天主教法典》第495~514條關於教區內的組織。他強調「慎思如何透過這些架構，更有效地產生主教的『集體性』形式的中介建議，這或許要靠整合或更新某些教會悠久的架構形式而達致。梵二希望這些架構能促進主

教的『集體性』精神，但這期望依然未能完全實現。我們仍在路上，還在中途的階段。」從而曾在《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭（16）中提及，可朝健康的「權責分配」（decentralisation）的方向去推進，後來又在《你們去宣講福音》宗座憲章（II, 2）再次重申。工作小組會從共議性的教會的角度出發，就教會群體的傳教使命，探討以下問題：

- a) 使教會之間有效地交換恩典成為可能的方式和條件（參閱：《綜合報告》4m），分享「精神財富、傳教人員及物質協助等」（《教會》教義憲章, 13）；
- b) 在共議性的教會中完善主教團的法規，以便他們可以在全體共議性的教會中成為行使合議制的主體，也可以藉以增加他們自己的理論和紀律的權威，而不限制每個主教或羅馬主教在教會中的適當權力，以作為整個教會合一的可見原則和基礎（參閱：《綜合報告》19）；
- c) 有機會將教會之間的共融結構擴大到主教團以外的層面，省思如何規範大洲或次大洲地區地方教會團體組織的地位，同時顧及從傳教的角度與不同文化和社會對話產出碩果的需要。（參閱：《綜合報告》19）

## III. 普世教會傳教的共議性的面貌

正在進行的共議性進程為行使伯多祿牧職帶來新的方式。因此，在普世教會的層面，教會的共議精神、普世主教的集體性以及羅馬主教的首席權之間的關係等問題正逐漸浮現出來（參閱：《綜合報告》13a）。工作小組將以這個觀點探討下列議題：



- a) 東方天主教會可為深化伯多祿首席權的教義作出貢獻，闡明其與普世主教的集體性和教會的共議精神之間的內在聯繫。（參閱：《綜合報告》6d）
- b) 大公合一的旅途為「天主教徒理解教宗牧職、普世主教的集體性、共議精神及它們之間的相互關係」作出貢獻。（《綜合報告》13b）
- c) 在一個共議性的教會中，羅馬教廷，作為襄助羅馬主教執行其普世職務的機構，本著《你們去宣講福音》宗座憲章的精神，思考教廷與地方教會、教廷與主教團、教廷與世界主教代表會議之間的關係。（參閱：《綜合報告》13c-d）
- d) 考慮梵蒂岡第二屆大公會議的教義以及大公會議後神學和教會法的發展，在共議性的教會中行使主教集體性的方式。
- e) 闡明世界主教代表會議的特殊身分，特別是主教擔任的具體角色以及天主子民在共議性的進程所有階段的參與。（參閱：《綜合報告》20）

#### IV. 共議性的方法

為了敞開心靈迎接基督在聖神中的臨在，我們蒙召去默觀聖言、祈禱和相互傾聽，為個人和團體的歸依做好準備。特別是彼此聆聽，需要不斷地操練與實踐，以便在教會生活的所有層面上，促進**靈性、制度、程序、禮儀**四個幅度的清晰表達。

截至目前的整個旅程，特別是在第一會期的過程中，「靈修交談」的實踐已經得到驗證與認可，確實能夠支持並表達我們在旅途中的

「**靈性幅度**」。實踐「靈修交談」並不意味著遵循某種成文的技巧，而是走上一條表達教會本身口傳性質的道路，這源於天主的自我啟示，傳達了祂的生命，「藉啟示與人交談，宛如朋友 [對話]。」（《天主的啟示》，2）

同時，共議性的方法要求注意「**制度的幅度**」，適當地反映教會生活與肩負使命的機構和事件，也注意「**程序的幅度**」，尤其是「制定決策」與執行決策之間的關係。

這三個幅度雖是不同的面向，但每個面向都需要特別的關注，且不應被視為各自獨立，反而應該在動態合一中去思考和生活。最後，由於禮儀既是教會生活的一面鏡子，又是教會生活的養分，因此這項工作也涉及「**禮儀的幅度**」：「如果感恩祭塑造了共議精神的模式，那麼我們應該採取的第一步就是懷著在基督內的真實友誼，以切合恩典的方式舉行彌撒。」（《綜合報告》3k）

在共議性的方法的橫向視角方面，工作小組將探討以下議題：

- a) 教會共議性的生活，其禮儀和聖事的根源（聆聽聖言和慶祝聖體聖事）與教會分辨的實踐之間，具豐富的關係。
- b) 更加澄清「靈修交談」的結構。工作小組從多元教會的靈修傳統和不同文化脈絡的經驗中得知其多樣性，將此多樣性納入考慮，會把「靈修交談」的結構說得更清楚（參閱：《綜合報告》2i-j）。
- c) 世界主教代表大會第一會期提出的邀請，一方面是「澄清靈修交談如何整合神學思想和人文社會科學的貢獻」（《綜合報告》2h），另一方面，透過相互聆聽、對話和參與團體分辨，

為「不同領域的專家結合其專業知識與個人靈修，使其所提供的是真正的教會服務。」（《綜合報告》15i）

- d) 從我們正在經歷的「時代變遷」的角度，著眼於神學和學科辨別的標準，順服於啟示並聆聽時代的記號，來釐清天主子民信仰的超性意識與牧者的訓導之間的循環關係。
- e) 從教會學的角度闡述「制定決策」和「執行決策」之間的關係，即所有人的參與和特定的某些人行使權威之間的關係，界定並確認不同教會主體以及不同機構和活動的職權範圍（教義、牧靈、文化），以此表達共議精神之實踐。
- f) 推廣一種適合共議性的教會的慶祝風格，使信友能夠經驗到並見證所有人的共同參與，同時尊重並促進每個人的角色、神恩及其職務的特殊性。

## V. 在傳教使命中的共議性的教會的「場所」

目前的共議性的進程清楚表明，關於地方教會和普世教會之間的「相互內在性」原則，如何有利於不同層面（地方、區域、普世）和諧地行使共議性精神、集體性和伯多祿的首席權。教會蒙召活出共融、參與和傳教的「地方」是由許多的「場所」組成。這不僅是一個事實，而且符合「天主因祂的慈善和智慧，樂意把自己啟示給人（親自顯現自己）並使人認識祂旨意的奧祕」（《天主的啟示》2）。與耶穌基督——唯一的中保和整個啟示的圓滿——的關係，總是有脈絡的：「發生」在某個地方。就這點來說，信仰經驗在「場所」產生了，也是一個詮釋學的空間，其中「對傳授的事蹟和言語之領悟都有進展」（《天主的啟示》

8），並且救贖真理的宣講，不斷有新的表達方式：「地點」是福音形式的組成部分。

我們生活的時代，人與團體之間的空間關係正發生深刻的變化。人的移動性、不同的文化和宗教經驗並存於相同的情境，以及數位環境（資訊領域）的普及，都是需要分辨的「時代徵兆」。

正在發生的變化以及對天主子民多元面貌的認識，召喚我們重新關注地方教會之間的關係，其彼此之間以及與羅馬主教之間的共融，構成了天主的教會，是唯一、至聖、至公、從宗徒傳下來的教會。在一個充滿暴力和分裂的世界中，以和諧的、兄弟情誼般的團結，實現社會正義、和平、和好並照顧共同家園，來見證人類的合一、共同的起源和共同的命運，從而克服因對某個地方及當地居民和文化的錯誤理解，而產生分裂的可能性，顯得日益迫切。

一個工作小組將研究地方、區域、普世三個教會階層的橫向關係，並採取此觀點來探討以下議題：

- a) 發展關心天主子民文化幅度的教會論（參閱：教宗方濟各在《福音的喜樂》115所說的話：「恩寵預設文化。天主的禮物降孕於領受者的文化中」）。事實上，似乎有必要在制度層面上也表達文化福傳與信仰本地化之間的互惠動力，為當地的詮釋學提供空間，避免「地方性」成為分裂的理由，也避免「普世性」變成一種霸權形式。
- b) 在宣講的動態中提到的「場所」，指的是宣講的原則：「這種適應人們文化而宣講啟示真理的作法，應當繼續奉為傳揚福音的定律。這樣一來，便能激發各國以本地方式表達基督福音的能

力，同時，又促進教會各民族間不同文化的生命交流。」（《論教會在現代世界》，44）

- c) 在處理重大道德和牧靈議題時，提及「場所」的特殊性和（不同層面的）教會共融的要求。
- d) 移民現象的影響代表著「重塑地方教會成為跨文化團體的現況。許多移民和難民身上承載著漂泊異鄉、戰爭和暴力的創傷，他們往往成為接納他們的團體中更新和富饒的泉源，以及與地理位置遙遠的教會直接聯繫的機會。」（《綜合報告》5d）
- e) 數位環境文化和新科技對「本地」概念的衝擊。例如，在網路上所有的關係和倡議，包括教會的關係和倡議，其「影響力和範圍遠超過傳統所理解的領土疆界。」（《綜合報告》17h）
- f) 來自天主教東方教會的大量信友遷移到以拉丁禮為主的地區，引發了教會法和牧靈問題，為此「當地拉丁禮教會需以共議精神之名，幫助移民至此的東方教會信徒忠實地保留他們的身分，並培養他們的特有的資產，而不經歷同化的過程。」（《綜合報告》6c）

#### 4. 一些橫向的參考點

深入研究所指出的觀點，可以有效地參考一些適用於每個觀點的原則。

**第一個原則：福傳使命乃是教會的動力和存在的理由。**提升教會的形象和共議性動力的目的是可信地且有效地體現和支持這

個使命，此乃所有分辨的終極標準。在傳揚福音上最有效的作法必須優先執行，勇於放棄那些被證實不太有用，甚至根本就是障礙的作法。正是這種對使命的追求，確保了共議性的進程不是教會自我檢視或擔心自身的平衡的一種作法，而是面向世界和整個人類，要求每位天主子民作出自己無可取代的貢獻。

「鮮血的大公主義」（參閱：《綜合報告》7d）強力地提醒我們，為福音作見證直至獻出生命的都是領了洗的人，不分宗派歸屬；因此，是共同的使命引導我們通往基督徒的合一之路，從具體的合作形式開始，我們必須繼續推進和嘗試。

如果傳教的動力是教會的本質，標誌著教會歷史的每一個時刻，那麼傳教的挑戰將隨著時間的推移而改變。因此，我們必須努力辨明當今世界的問題：如果無法識別並回應這些問題，我們的宣講將失去連結性和吸引力。基於此種需要，我們關注年輕人、數位文化，並讓窮人和邊緣群體參與共議性的進程，以便他們的觀點能夠揭示社會、經濟和政治的動態，否則這些動態可能會被隱藏。教會結構的任何變化都必須有效地應對當今世界傳教的挑戰。

**第二個原則：促進參與傳教的使命，這是所有領了洗的人的恩寵和責任，他們要積極運用信仰的超性意識及各自的神恩，好偕同主教行使的職權共同發揮影響力：**

「在所有信友都被賦予的信仰的超性意識和在實現共議精神的不同層面上進行分辨，以及那些行使合一與治理的牧靈職務的權柄，三者之間的循環，闡明了共議精神的動力。這種循環性促進所有領洗的人的尊嚴和共同責任，強化聖神在天主子民內



撒播神恩的臨在，承認牧者們與羅馬主教的合議及在階層共融中的特定職務，以及確保共議性的進程和活動忠於信仰寶庫，並聆聽聖神的聲音，以更新教會的使命。」（國際神學委員會，〈教會生活及使命內的共議精神〉，72）

因此，共議性的幅度和等級組織的幅度並不存在競爭，將它們結合在一起的張力才是動力的重要來源。尤其，決策過程是創造性地處理這張力的地方，從而使每個人都能善盡自己的特定責任而不被剝奪。

**第三個原則：**銜接地方教會與普世教會，同時考慮中間層級的多樣性與一致性。惟一、至聖、至公，從宗徒傳下來的教會存在於地方教會之中，並來自地方教會（參閱《教會》教義憲章，23），各地方教會彼此共融，也與羅馬教會共融。每一個教會，在基督內，並透過聖神，都是各團體的主體，受聖言的感召，由聖事禮儀所啟發，天主的子民在其特定的文化和社會背景下生活奔走，體現天主的恩寵。同時，每個教會蒙召與所有其他教會分享其所得的豐富恩賜。這是透過主教的職務來實現的，主教是所有信友共議性參與教會使命的合一原則和保證者，與其他主教，「與伯多祿一起，並在伯多祿權下」，為整個教會服務（參閱：國際神學委員會，〈教會生活及使命內的共議精神〉，61）。因此，共議精神適時地構成了理解和促進主教集體性的教會背景，並描述了在每個教會內和教會間共融、分辨往前邁進的方法時，促進大公合一所應遵循的道路。我們正在尋找一種適合當今世界的方式，在多樣性中實現合一，在不消除差異和特殊性的情況下體驗彼此之間的聯繫，但也不要漠視一些挑戰——例如照顧共同家園、移民或數位文化——只有共同應對才能解決。

**第四個原則：**最根本而費力，但同時又能帶來希望和創造力的原則，此即**共議性的歷程的精妙靈修特徵**。藉著天主父，在耶穌基督內，因著聖神的德能，主內的姊妹弟兄聚集在一起，彼此相遇，互相聆聽，各自從自己的召叫、神恩和職務的角度來提供觀點並作出貢獻。這相遇和聆聽本身並不是目的：而是開闢一個空間，使我們能夠一起分辨聖神的聲音，並接受祂的召喚。在教會的所有層面上，我們的目標都是一樣的：明瞭主要我們做什麼，並且準備好去做。門徒的任務，也正是他們的確實身分，就是跟隨主，無論主決定往哪裡去，都要共同完成原本屬於祂的救贖使命。

## 5. 一起邁向2024年10月

隨著世界主教代表大會第十六屆常務會議第二會期的籌備工作不斷推進，也得益於此處制定的方向，第一會期《綜合報告》中確定的其他兩項指導方針的工作也在繼續進行。

第一個指導方針，是在地方教會中保持共議性的動力，以便越來越多的人能夠直接體驗到。我們再次邀請所有教區重新閱讀《綜合報告》，以確定符合當地情況的最重要的請求，並在此基礎上擘劃「最妥適得當的措施，讓全體天主子民共同參與。」（《邁向2024年10月》，2）

第二個指導方針，是以共議性的方式深入研究一系列極為重要的議題，這些議題「尚須與整個教會及羅馬教廷各部會通力合作協力推動」（同上，導言）。目前正在成立研究小組，對所確定的主題進行深入研究，與本文件同時發布的文件《研究小組與羅



馬教廷各部會通力合作共同探討，世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務大會第一會期提出的問題》，將說明得更加詳實。此外，為更廣泛地服務共議性的進程，世界主教代表會議總祕書處將啟動一個「常設論壇」，以深化教會共議精神的神學、教會法學、牧靈、靈修和交談等面向，也回應《綜合報告》所提的要求，「在專門術語的使用和概念的瞭解上，深化我們的神學幅度」（《綜合報告》1p）。國際神學委員會與法規條文部同意，為大會服務而設立的教會法學委員會將協助執行這項任務。

就已經啟動的許多工作小組，它們所涵蓋的主題之間，不可能劃出一條清晰的界線：在不同層面和不同軸線上，存在許多聯繫、接觸點，甚至重疊。大會總祕書處的任務之一是確保工作順利進行，以聽取各領域逐步取得的成果，好為2024年10月的會期提供適當的資訊。

梵蒂岡，2024年3月14日

（天主教會臺灣地區主教團祕書處 譯）

下載其他語言：

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/03/14/240314g.html>

## 聖父——教宗方濟各 致堂區司鐸們的信函

親愛的司鐸弟兄們：

這次的「世界主教代表會議與堂區司鐸」國際會議，以及與所有與會者的對話，讓我有機會為全球所有的堂區司鐸祈禱。我滿懷真摯的情感向大家致意。

倘若沒有你們的委身和牧靈服務，教會便無法前行。這話的意思如此明顯，聽來平凡無奇，但卻再真實不過了。因此，首先我願意對你們每天慷慨的服務，在各式各樣的土壤裡散播福音的種子，表示我最真摯的感謝和讚賞。（參閱：谷四1~25）

正如這幾天你們在分享中所經驗到的，你們所服務的堂區千差萬別：有的位於大城市的郊區，如同我個人以前在布宜諾斯艾利斯所知的，有的位於地廣人稀的地區，面積之大有如一個大省；在許多歐洲國家的堂區座落於市鎮中心，古老的大殿處於人口凋零、老化的社區；另有些堂區則是在大樹下舉行感恩慶典，小朋友的歌聲交織著鳥兒的鳴叫聲。

堂區司鐸很清楚這一點，因為他們內心明白天主子民生活的喜樂與艱辛、他們擁有的資源，以及他們的需求。為此，一個共議性的教會需要屬於她的堂區司鐸。沒有司鐸，我們就無法學

習如何結伴同行，以及如何踏上同道偕行的道路——「這條天主期望教會在第三個千禧年所走的道路。」<sup>1</sup>

除非堂區團體的特色是所有領了洗的人都承擔宣講福音的使命，否則我們無法成為一個傳教的共議性的教會。如果堂區不是一個傳教的共議性的教會，那麼整個教會也不會是。第十六屆世界主教代表會議常務大會第一會期的《綜合報告》，非常清楚地說明這一點。從堂區的結構與堂區生活的組織開始，堂區要思考「信友們在社會、家庭和職場中所肩負的使命服務，而不是僅僅關注內部事務或組織問題」（《綜合報告》，8.1）。堂區團體需要逐漸成為領了洗的人以傳教使徒的身分出發，且懷著喜樂返回的地方，分享上主透過他們的見證所行的奇蹟。

作為一位牧者，我們蒙召在此進程中陪伴我們所服務的團體，同時以祈禱、分辨以及使徒的熱情，確保我們的服務切合傳教的共議性的教會的需要。這挑戰，就在教宗、主教和羅馬教廷眼前，但身為堂區司鐸你們也要面對。上主今日召叫了我們，祝聖了我們，並要求我們聆聽聖神的聲音，朝著祂為我們所指示的方向前進。有一件事我們可以確定：祂永遠不會讓我們缺少祂的恩寵。在路程中，我們會發現，如何使我們的使徒工作擺脫那些耗損我們的事物，重新發現其最真實的核心：宣講天主聖言並及為擘餅而聚集信友團體。

我鼓勵你們接受這份天主的召叫，以堂區司鐸的身分成為傳教

的共議性的教會的建造者，並熱忱地獻身自己以達成這個目標。為此，我願意提供三點建議來幫助你們思考你們作為牧者的生活方式與活動。

1. 首先，我要求你們，活出你們公務司祭職的特有神恩，好能為聖神在天主子民中所播撒的各種恩賜提供更多的服務。當務之急是「要在信德意識下，去發掘信友們的各種不同的奇恩，無論是卑微的或是高超的」（參閱：梵蒂岡第二屆大公會議文獻《司鐸職務與生活》法令，9），因為無論在任何情況或背景下，眾平信徒的神恩為福傳都是不可或缺的。如此一來，我深信你們會發現許多隱藏的寶藏，在艱鉅的福傳工作中，不再感到孤單。你們將體驗到成為父親的喜樂，真正的父親不支配他人，卻在所有的男女身上激發出他們內在巨大而寶貴的潛能。
2. 我衷心建議你們，採取「靈修交談」的方法，來學會操練團體分辨的藝術。事實證明，在共議性的進程以及世界主教代表會議中，靈修交談的方法非常有幫助。我相信，你們會由此收穫豐碩而美好的果實，不僅在堂區諮議會等共融機構，而且在許多其他領域也是如此。正如《綜合報告》中明確指出的，分辨是共議性的教會中牧靈活動的關鍵因素：「為了闡明教會生活，分辨的操練能以合乎在地民情的方式，有效地運用在牧靈領域。我們將更容易認識臨在於團體的神恩，明智地委派任務和職務。我們能跳脫單純的活動策劃，在聖神的光照下闡建牧靈的途徑。」（《綜合報告》，2.1）

1. 世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念——教宗方濟各致詞，2015年10月17日。

3. 最後，我敦促各位，在你們之間和你們與你們的主教之間，凡事都秉持著分享的精神和兄弟情誼。這強烈的呼聲來自「司鐸持續培育的國際研討會」，此研討會今年2月在羅馬開幕，有來自約18個國家，800多位主教、神父、平信徒及男女度獻身生活者參與，其主題為：「把天主所賦予你的恩賜再熾燃起來」（參閱：弟後一6）。除非我們先成為弟兄姊妹，否則我們無法成為真正的父親。除非我們在我們之間活出那分享的精神與弟兄姊妹的情誼，否則我們也無法在託付給我們照顧的團體中滋養參與感和共融感。我十分清楚，在不同的牧靈責任中持續持守這份承諾，看來似乎是一個沉重負擔，甚至是浪費時間，但其實是相反：因為只有這樣，我們才會是可信靠的，最終，我們的牧靈活動才不會分散別人已經聚集的一切。

不僅是傳教的共議性的教會需要堂區司鐸，持續進行中的2021~2024年世界主教代表會議「來體現共議性的教會：共融、參與、使命」也是一樣。我們期待的第十六屆世界主教代表會議常務大會第二會期將於今年10月舉行。為準備此會期，我們需要聆聽你們的聲音。

為此，我邀請所有「世界主教代表會議與堂區司鐸」國際會議的與會者，在你們彼此之間，以及回國後，與你們的堂區司鐸弟兄一起成為同道偕行的傳教士。我鼓勵你們，以傳教的共議性的思維來反省堂區司鐸職務革新的問題，好使世界主教代表會議總祕書處能收集你們的獨特貢獻，來準備第二會期的《工作文件》。此國際會議召開的目的，是為了聆聽堂區司鐸的聲

音，但不會在今日就結束：我們需要持續聆聽你們的聲音。

親愛的弟兄們，在這進程中，我就在你們身旁，而我也參與其中。我衷心地祝福你們，而我也需要感受到你們的親近和祈禱的支持。讓我們將自己託付於萬福童貞瑪利亞——我們的道路之母。她為我們指出道路；她引領我們走向耶穌——祂是道路、真理和生命。

教宗方濟各

羅馬，拉特朗聖若望大殿，2024年5月2日

（天主教會台灣地區主教團 恭譯）





聖父——教宗方濟各致堂區司鐸們的信函於  
「世界主教代表會議與堂區司鐸」國際會議予以  
堂區司鐸的差遣令

2024年5月2日

[B0372]

## 差遣令

各位來自全球各地的司鐸代表，我有件事要請  
求你們：我們需要你們的幫忙，為能持續聆聽  
堂區司鐸的聲音，以準備世界主教代表會議大  
會的第二會期。本次的會議非常重要，但還不  
夠：如果我們想要讓更多的堂區司鐸進入這股  
共議性的動力，我們必須再接再厲。這絕不能  
只靠世界主教代表會議總秘書處及本次會議的  
羅馬教廷部會來完成。

因此，今天我委託你們賦歸之後，與你們的堂  
區司鐸弟兄成為同道偕行的傳教使徒：儘可能  
在堂區司鐸之間促進靈修交談的機會，不論是  
透過實體聚會或視訊會議，充分利用現成的會  
議，或為此目的安排一個會議，在共議性的傳  
教使命的啟發之下，反省堂區司鐸職務的革

新，而我也請你們，按所提供給你們的指示，  
將這幾天會議的成果呈報世界主教代表會議總  
秘書處。你們返國後，請與你們的主教及主教  
團講述這一構想，並且告訴他們，這是教宗交  
付給你們的任務。

我已經給全世界所有的堂區司鐸寫了一封信，告知他  
們上述做法，為能向他們介紹你們各位是同道偕行的  
傳教士。現在我簽署這封信，然後交給你們每人一份  
副本，好使你們回去後分發。

感謝你們的合作。我會以祈禱陪伴你們，請各  
位也不要忘記為我祈禱。

教宗方濟各

(天主教會臺灣地區主教團 恭譯)

義大利原文：

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2024/05/08/0372/00782.html>



SECRETARIA GENERALIS SYNODI

## How to be a synodal Church in mission?

### Guidelines for work in view of the 2024 Assembly released

Press Release, 12 December 2023

At the end of their meeting on 5 December, the members of the Ordinary Council of the Synod of Bishops adopted a **Document** for the work to be engaged by the Catholic Church until the celebration of the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (October 2024).

These are **guidelines** with a concrete **roadmap** in which the deepening of synodality in a missionary perspective and the broadening of experiences of synodality at the local level are the cornerstones on which the local communities are called to reflect, beginning with the *Synthesis Report* adopted at the end of the First Session of the XVI Assembly on 28 October. As the **Holy Father** recalled when approving these work guidelines, “the Synod is about synodality and not about this or that theme... The important thing is how the reflection is done, that is, in a synodal way”.

“Building on the experience of last October’s assembly, and especially on the Synthesis Report that the members approved, the Ordinary Council decided on a **unified yet differentiated path** depending on the competencies and possibilities within local ecclesial realities,” says **Cardinal Mario Grech**, Secretary General of the Synod, adding, “This is already a synodal way of working in the Church where each person cooperates for the good of all according to his or her vocation”.

In fact, keeping the two main themes or guidelines in mind, **the dioceses** are asked:

- 1) with regard to deepening: to promote a reflection that focuses on the theme of **differentiated co- responsibility in the mission** of all members of the People of God (cf. Synthesis Report, chapters 8- 12, 16 and 18). The local Churches are asked to carry out a further consultation, involving **people and groups (parish priests, participation bodies, synodal teams, etc.) who express a variety of experiences, skills, charisms, ministries** within the People of God and whose point of view is of particular help in focusing on “how” to grow as a synodal Church. In this sense, the involvement of **experts and academic institutions** present in the area seems indispensable, so that **the contribution of theological and canonical expertise, as well as the relevant human and social sciences, can be present**;
- 2) regarding the broadening of experiences of synodality: to continue or promote new initiatives to grow as a synodal church on mission, with training and listening experiences that also involve those who have not been touched by the process so far, groups living in conditions of poverty and social marginality as well as Christians of different denominations and people of other religions; to collect and transmit testimonies and best practices to be sent to the Synod Secretariat through the Bishops’ Conferences or the Eastern Hierarchical Structures.

In order to facilitate the work of the local communities, the General Secretariat has prepared a possible work sheet to help the work of receiving the fruits of October’s synod assembly and of continuing the synodal journey of conversion in the local Churches. The sheet is available on **synod.va**.

The **Bishops' Conferences and the Oriental Hierarchical Structures** are asked to accompany the work of the local Churches by offering them the indications regarding the **ways and times** of the in-depth study and work; to also promote their reflection on differentiated co-responsibility with regard to mission especially at the level of the groupings of Churches (regional, national, international) and in the relations between the Churches and the Bishop of Rome; to elaborate the synthesis of the contributions of the in-depth study received from the local Churches and/or produced at the national level, and to send them, together with the best practices collected by the local Churches, to the General Secretariat of the Synod by 15 May.

At the same time, the **General Secretariat of the Synod** will promote and coordinate reflection on some “major” issues in the Synthesis Report that must be handled at the level of the whole Church and in collaboration with the Dicastries of the Roman Curia. In the manner that is proper to Synodal Assemblies, a list of topics will be submitted to the Holy Father. Groups of experts from all continents, with the involvement of the relevant Dicastries of the Roman Curia, will be called to work in a synodal manner on the topics that Pope Francis will indicate. A report on the progress of this work will be presented at the Second Session in October 2024.

In all this work, the members and all the participants of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, appointed by the Holy Father, will have the important task of being ambassadors of the path taken and will be called upon to be the real points of reference for their respective ecclesial realities.

## Possible Worksheet

This sheet is offered as an aid

- 1/ to receive the fruits of the October synod assembly at local level
- 2/ to continue the synodal path of conversion in the local churches.

*The numbers in parentheses refer to sections in the Synthesis Report*

### 1. Steps that can be taken in order to:

1/ convey the experience of the October assembly

2/ Publicize and work on the *Synthesis Report*

3/ Widely disseminate the *Letter to the People of God*

- List what has already been done, what needs doing
- Participants' testimonies
- Presentations
- Articles and interviews
- Translation and publication of the summary
- Summaries and worksheets for working on synthesis

### 2. What can we do locally at parish, diocesan, national and continental levels to continue learning synodality?

- Choose 3 priorities from the 20 topics of the Synthesis Report (e.g. 1 for each part of the synthesis).
- Choose 3 concrete initiatives to implement from the various proposals in

the Synthesis that can be applied immediately at local level (see list of possible proposals to put into practice.

**3. What proposals can be made to concretely experiment with the synodal method of conversation in the Spirit in the various meetings and assemblies (in parishes, movements, communities, dioceses, etc.), participatory bodies? (2.j)**

-Identify persons/organisations with facilitation skills (2.k)

-Provide training in conversation in the Spirit, training in listening and discernment, and training for facilitators

**4. How can we involve all the baptised more closely in the synod process (1.m) and how to listen more to those on the periphery (16)?**

What concrete initiatives can be taken to listen to and consult the poor (4), migrants (5 and 6), young people and women (6)?

What concrete steps can be taken to listen to priests and invite them to participate in the synod experience (1.n +11)?

**5. From among the “Questions to be addressed”, choose 1 or 2 topics to be explored in relation to local issues and have them drawn up by a commission of theologians, canonists and pastoral leaders.**

**6. Identify and share 2 or 3 local resources and initiatives or good practices of synodality** that would be interesting for others to know about and send them to the synod secretariat for the website of the General Secretariat of the Synod [synoderessources.org](http://synoderessources.org).

**7. How can we deepen the definition and understanding of synodality in our cultural context?**

- Using *Synthesis Report* No. 1 “Synodality: Experience and

Understanding” as a starting point, deepen understanding of synodality from one’s own context and propose images of synodality that can make sense in the local culture.

**8. How can we implement and deepen the spiritual dimension of synodality at the local level (3k.l.m)?**

- Develop proposals for spiritual exercises related to the theme of synodality.

- Develop approaches to synodality in places of popular piety.

- Encourage people to pray for the synod by developing spiritual proposals, particularly during Lent and Easter.

**9. Involve the various participatory bodies (councils) (18) in receiving the Synthesis and in the discernments to be made in preparation for the next session.**

Reread the way synodality is concretely lived (especially the dimension of participation and authority) in these bodies in the light of the *Synthesis Report* (12.k).

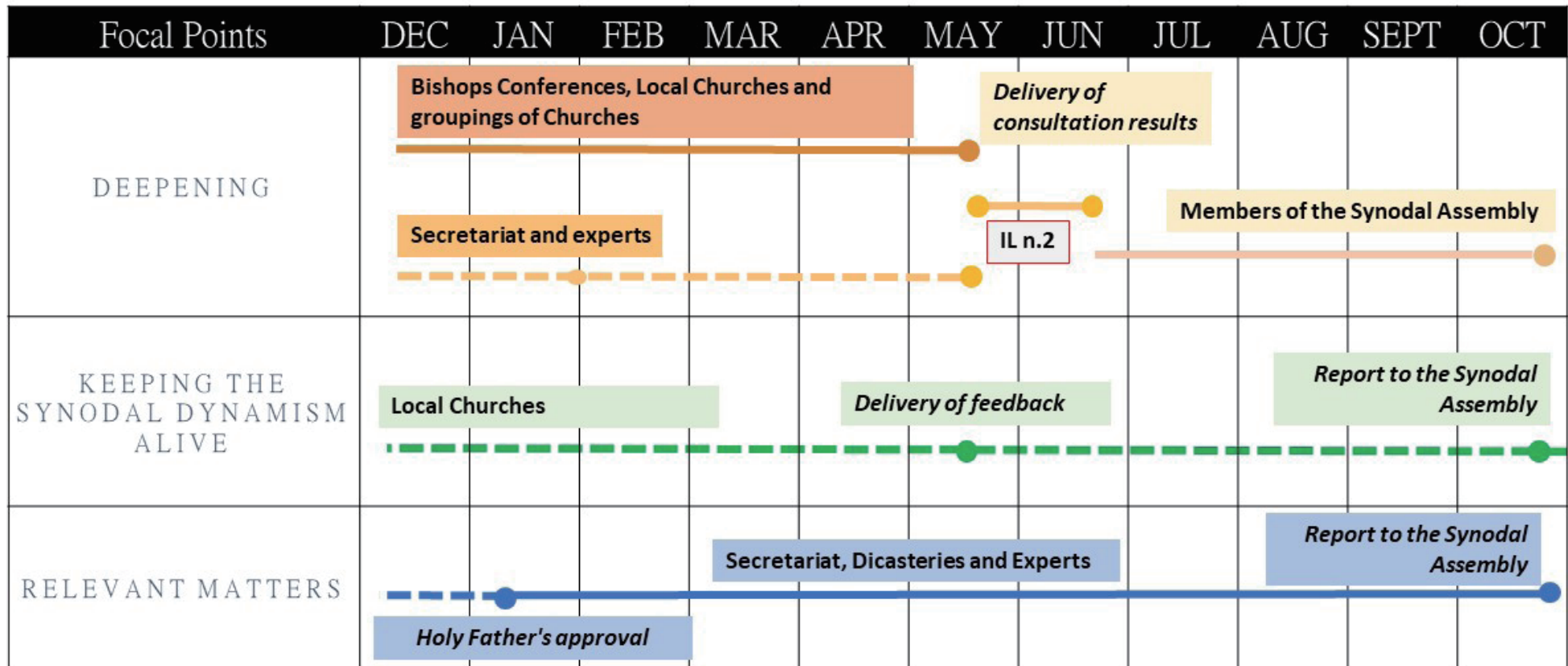
**10. With formation centers and theological faculties**

- Implement concrete initiatives for formation in synodality (14.)

- Organise a consultation of those responsible for initial and continuing formation (14.o)

- Work on the issues to be investigated and prepare contributions to be proposed to the Bishops’ Conferences.

# THE WORK OF THE THREE FOCAL POINTS AT A GLANCE





SECRETARIA GENERALIS SYNODI

**How to be a synodal Church in mission?  
Five perspectives for theological exploration  
in view of the Second Session of the  
XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops**

**Foreword**

“Rather than saying that the Church has a mission, let us affirm that the Church is mission. ‘As the Father has sent me, I also send you’ (Jn 20:21): the Church receives its own mission from Christ, the Father’s Envoy. Supported and guided by the Holy Spirit, she proclaims and bears witness to the Gospel to those who do not know or accept it, with the preferential option for the poor that is rooted in Jesus’ mission. In this way it contributes to the coming of the Kingdom of God, of which it ‘constitutes the seed and the beginning’ (cf. LG 5)” (*Synthesis Report* of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops [SR], 8a). Growing as a synodal Church is a concrete way to respond, each and all together, to this call and this mission.

Our brothers and sisters who have participated in synodal meetings, especially those who took part in the First Session, have had a real experience of the unity and plurality of the Church. Even in a time like ours, marked by growing inequalities, bitter polarisations and a continuous explosion of conflicts, the Church is, in Christ, a sign and instrument of union with God and unity between people, and is called to be so ever more visibly. Listening to the Holy Spirit, welcoming the testimony of Scripture and reading the signs of the times in faith, She can harmonise differences as an expression of the inexhaustible richness of the mystery of Christ. The experience of the Synod as a practice of unity in diversity thus represents a prophetic word addressed to a world that struggles to believe that peace and concord are possible.

**1. The guiding question**

The synodal process has made us increasingly aware of our mission. In the First Assembly Session, this awareness progressively “took on flesh”, guiding the path towards the Second Session (October 2024). The document *Towards October 2024* (11 December 2023) explains that the time between the First and Second Session finds us engaged in another consultative moment guided by the following question: *HOW can we be a synodal Church on mission ?*

The objective is to identify the paths to take and the tools to adopt in the different contexts and circumstances, so as to enhance the originality of each baptised person and each Church in the unique mission of proclaiming the Risen Lord and His Gospel to the world today. It is therefore not a question of limiting ourselves to the plan of technical or procedural improvements that make the Church’s structures more efficient, but of working on the concrete forms of the missionary commitment to which we are called, in the dynamism between unity and diversity proper to a synodal Church (*Towards October 2024*, n. 1).

The focus will, therefore, be the theme of everyone’s participation, with our varied vocations, charisms and ministries, in the one mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ to the world. In light of the Church’s missionary transformation, envisaged in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, according to which “the new evangelisation must imply a new protagonism of each of the baptised” (n. 120), we will reflect on the contribution to the mission that comes from the recognising and promoting the specific gifts of each member of the People of God, and on the relationship between the common work and the ministry of authority of the Pastors. The dynamic connection between the participation of all and the authority of some, in the horizon of communion and mission, will be deepened in its theological meaning, in the practical ways of setting it in motion, and in the reality of canonical structures. This exploration will be articulated on three levels, distinct but interdependent: that of the local Church, that of the groupings

of Churches (national, regional, continental), that of the whole Church in the relationship between the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, episcopal collegiality and ecclesial synodality. Identifying the three levels makes it possible to organise the work in view of the Second Session of the Assembly, without forgetting that they are three connected perspectives through which to look at a unitary and organic reality: the life of the missionary synodal Church.

## 2. Steps towards drafting the *Instrumentum laboris* for the Second Session

On the basis of the guiding question, a new consultation process was opened, different in character from that of the first phase of the synodal process, as explained in the document *Towards October 2024*, asking the Bishops' Conferences and the Eastern Hierarchical Structures to be the reference for this part of the process and to coordinate the collection of contributions from Dioceses and Eparchies, setting out the methods and timing. They will also carry out the in-depth study from the same guiding question at their level and at the continental level, as deemed appropriate and feasible (cf. n.1) The syntheses that will gather the fruit of this consultation, by Episcopal Conferences, Eastern Hierarchical Structures and Dioceses that do not belong to any Episcopal Conference, must reach the General Secretariat of the Synod by 15 May 2024 and will serve as the basis for the drafting of the next *Instrumentum laboris*.

Other materials will be added to the syntheses, starting with the results of the international meeting "Parish priests for the Synod" (Sacrofano [Rome], 28 April - 2 May 2024), convened to meet the need, repeatedly expressed during the first phase and also during the First Session, to listen to and enhance the experience of priests engaged in pastoral ministry in the local Churches, with a view to their greater involvement in the synodal process.

Lastly, the results of the theological study carried out by five Working Groups activated by the General Secretariat of the Synod, in the wake of what was requested several times by the Assembly and in the spirit of what is foreseen by Article 10 of the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio* will also be included in the materials for the *Instrumentum laboris*. These Groups will be composed of experts, respecting the necessary variety of geographical origin, gender and ecclesial condition, and will work with a synodal method. In particular, three Groups will focus primarily on the three levels indicated above (one Group on each level), while two other Groups will work on the two transversal axes, highlighting the interconnections and interdependencies between the levels, according to the outlines summarised in the following paragraphs.

## 3. Perspectives to be explored

### I. The Synodal Missionary Face of the Local Church

The *Synthesis Report* approved at the end of the First Session recognises that the co-responsibility of all in the mission "must be the criterion at the basis of the structuring of Christian communities and of the entire local Church with all its services, in all its institutions, in all its organism of communion" (SR 18b). The search for the face and the paths of the missionary synodal Church directly involves every local Church, in the plurality of the subjects that constitute it, without forgetting that the task of bearing witness to the Gospel unites all the baptised, beyond the confessional affiliations, by virtue of the common baptismal dignity. The Working Group, which will take on the perspective of the synodal Church on mission at the local Church level, will explore points such as:

- a) the meaning and forms of the diocesan bishop's ministry as the "visible principle and foundation of unity" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 23) of the Church entrusted to him and, in particular, relations with the presbyterate, participatory bodies, consecrated life and ecclesial aggregations, in a missionary perspective (cf. SR 12);

- b) the introduction of structures and processes to regularly verify the work of the diocesan bishop and those who carry out a ministry (ordained or non-ordained) in the local Church, fostering *accountability* (accounting for the exercise of one's responsibilities) by all, in different ways (cf. SR 12j) ;
- c) the style and mode of operation of participatory bodies. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between the consultative moment and the deliberative moment in decision-making processes (cf. SR 18g), ensuring that women too, where this is not yet the case, can participate in decision-making processes and take on roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry (cf. SR 9m);
- d) the presence and service of instituted ministries and de facto ministries, which can contribute to configure in a more choral and effective way the work of evangelisation of the local Church in the territory and between cultures, enhancing the charisms and the role of the laity in carrying out the mission of the Church (cf. SR 8d-e), with respect for their specificity (cf. SR 8f) and in relation to the tension between the mission of sanctification of temporal realities and the carrying out of tasks and ministries within the Church (cf. SR 8j), also considering the opportunity to establish new ministries (cf. SR 8n and 16p).

Particular attention must be paid to “recognising and valuing the contribution of women and increasing the pastoral responsibilities entrusted to them in all areas of the Church's life and mission. In order to give better expression to everyone's charisms and better respond to pastoral needs, how can the Church include more women in existing roles and ministries? If new ministries are needed, at what level and in what way?” (SR 9i).

## II. The missionary synodal face of church groupings

In 2015, in his *Address for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, Pope Francis affirmed that “the second level of the exercise of synodality is that of Ecclesiastical

Provinces and Regions, Particular Councils and in a special way Episcopal Conferences”, referring to canons 495-514 of the Code of Canon Law, regarding groupings of particular Churches. He emphasised the need and urgency to “reflect in order to realise even more, through these bodies, the intermediate instances of *collegiality*, perhaps integrating and updating some aspects of the ancient ecclesiastical order. The Council's wish that these bodies could contribute to increasing the spirit of episcopal *collegiality* has not yet been fully realised. We are halfway, part of the way'. It thus points in the direction of a 'healthy decentralisation', already expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (n. 16), later taken up in the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* (II,2). The Working Group, which will take on the perspective of the synodal Church on mission at the level of the groupings of Churches, will explore points such as:

- a) ways and conditions that make possible the effective exchange of gifts between the Churches (cf. SR 4m), sharing “spiritual treasures, apostolic workers and material resources” (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 13);
- b) the statute of the Episcopal Conferences in a missionary synodal Church, so that they may grow as subjects of the exercise of collegiality in an all-synodal Church, also by increasing their own doctrinal and disciplinary authority, without limiting either the power proper to each Bishop in his Church, or that of the Bishop of Rome as the visible principle and foundation of unity of the whole Church (cf. SR 19);
- c) the opportunity to expand the structures of communion between the Churches beyond the level of the Episcopal Conferences, considering how to specify the status of the bodies that group the local Churches of a continental or sub-continental area, taking into account the needs of a fruitful dialogue with cultures and societies in a missionary perspective (cf. SR 19).

## III. The missionary synodal face of the universal Church

The ongoing synodal process is bringing out a new way of exercising the

Petrine ministry. Thus, at the level of the universal Church, the question of the relationship between ecclesial synodality, episcopal collegiality and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome is emerging (cf. SR 13a). The Working Group that will take up this perspective will explore points such as:

- a) the contribution that the Eastern Churches can offer for a deepening of the doctrine of the Petrine primacy, illuminating its intrinsic link with episcopal collegiality and ecclesial synodality (cf. SR 6d);
- b) the contribution of the ecumenical path “to the Catholic understanding of primacy, collegiality, synodality and their mutual relations” (SR 13b);
- c) the role of the Roman Curia, as a body at the service of the universal ministry of the Bishop of Rome, in a synodal Church, considering the relations between the Curia and the local Churches, the Curia and the Episcopal Conferences, the Curia and the Synod of Bishops, in the spirit of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* (cf. SR 13c-d);
- d) the ways of exercising episcopal collegiality in a synodal Church, taking into account the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council and the theological and canonical developments of the post-conciliar period;
- e) the peculiar identity of the Synod of Bishops, articulating in particular the specific role of Bishops and the participation of the People of God in all the phases of the synodal process (cf. SR 20).

#### IV. The Synodal Method

To open minds and hearts to welcome Christ present in His Spirit, we are called to meditation on Sacred Scripture, prayer and mutual listening, in readiness for personal and community conversion. Listening to one another, in particular, requires the constant exercise of practices that foster at all levels of the Church’s life the articulation of four dimensions: *spiritual, institutional, procedural, liturgical*.

Throughout the journey so far, and especially in the course of the First Session, the practice of “conversation in the Spirit” has been tested and recognised as capable of supporting and expressing the *spiritual dimension*

of the journey we are on. Practising “conversation in the Spirit” does not mean following a codified technique, but embarking on a path that gives expression to the Church’s per se colloquial nature, which springs from the dialogue with which God himself, communicating his life, “speaks to men as friends and *converses* [*conversatur*] with them” (*Dei Verbum*, 2).

At the same time, the synodal method calls for care to be taken of the *institutional dimension*, proper to the bodies and events in which the life and mission of the Church are expressed, and of the *procedural dimension*, paying particular attention to the relationship between *decision-making* and decision-taking.

These three dimensions should not be conceived as separate: they are distinct aspects, each requiring specific attention, to be thought of and lived in their dynamic unity. Finally, since the liturgy is both a mirror and nourishment of the life of the Church, the work will also concern the *liturgical dimension*: “If the Eucharist gives form to synodality, the first step to be taken is to honour its grace with a celebratory style that matches the gift and with an authentic fraternity” (SR 3k).

The Working Group, which will take on the transversal perspective of the synodal method, will explore points such as:

- a) the fruitful relationship between the liturgical and sacramental rootedness of the Church’s synodal life (listening to the Word and celebrating the Eucharist) and the practice of ecclesial discernment;
- b) a better clarification of the configuration of the ‘conversation in the Spirit’, taking into account the plurality of declinations it knows from the experience of multiple ecclesial spiritualities and different cultural contexts (cf. SR 2i-j);
- c) the invitation formulated by the First Session of the Synodal Assembly, on the one hand, to “clarify how conversation in the Spirit can integrate the contributions of theological thought and the human and social sciences” (SR 2h), and on the other hand, for “experts in the various fields of knowledge to mature a spiritual wisdom that allows their



specialised expertise to become a true ecclesial service” (SR 15i) through mutual listening, dialogue and participation in community discernment;

- d) focusing on the criteria for theological and disciplinary discernment, clarifying the circular relationship, in obedience to Revelation and listening to the signs of the times, between the *sensus fidei* of the People of God and the Magisterium of the Pastors, in the perspective of the “change of epoch” we are living through;
- e) the articulation between ‘decision making’ and ‘decision taking’ in the ecclesiological perspective of the relationship between the participation of all and the specific exercise of authority by some, identifying and specifying the spheres of competence (doctrinal, pastoral, cultural) of the different ecclesial subjects and of the different bodies and events in which the practice of synodality is expressed;
- f) the promotion of a celebratory style appropriate to a synodal Church, which enables the common participation of all to be experienced and witnessed, while respecting and promoting the specificity of the roles, charisms and ministries of each.

## V. The ‘place’ of the synodal Church on mission

The current synodal process clearly shows how the reference to the principle of ‘mutual interiority’ between the local Churches and the universal Church favours the symphonic exercise of synodality, collegiality and primacy at different levels (local, regional, universal). The ‘place’ in which the Church is called to live communion, participation and mission is made up of many ‘places’. This is not only a fact but corresponds to the way in which “it pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself [reveal himself in person] and to manifest the mystery of his will” (*Dei Verbum* 2). The relationship with Jesus Christ - mediator and fullness of the entire revelation - is always contextual: it ‘takes place’. The ‘place’, in this sense, is generative of the believing experience. It is also a hermeneutical space in which “the understanding of things as well as of the words

transmitted grows” (*Dei Verbum* 8) and the proclamation of salvific truth finds ever new expressions: the “where” is constitutive of the kerygmatic form.

We live in a time in which the spatial dimension of the relationship between people and communities is profoundly changing. Human mobility, the presence of different cultures and religious experiences in the same context, and the pervasiveness of the digital environment (the infosphere) can be considered ‘signs of the times’ that need to be discerned.

The changes taking place and the awareness of the plurality of the faces of the People of God call for renewed attention to the relationships between the local Churches that, in communion with each other and with the Bishop of Rome, constitute the Church of God, a holy catholic and apostolic Church. In a world marked by violence and fragmentation, a witness to the unity of humanity, its common origin and common destiny, in a coordinated and fraternal solidarity towards social justice, peace, reconciliation and the care of the common home, thus overcoming the divisive potential of some erroneous ways of understanding the reference to a place, its inhabitants and its culture, appears ever more urgent.

The working group that will take this perspective - transversal to the three distinct levels of ecclesial relations: local, regional, universal - will explore points such as:

- a) the development of an ecclesiology attentive to the cultural dimension of the People of God (with reference to what Pope Francis says in *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 115: “Grace presupposes culture, and the gift of God is incarnated in the culture of those who receive it”). In fact, it seems necessary to translate also on the institutional level the dynamism of reciprocity between evangelisation of culture and inculturation of the faith, giving space to local hermeneutics, without ‘the local’ becoming a reason for division and without ‘the universal’ turning into a form of hegemony;

- b) the reference to ‘place’ in the dynamics of proclamation, in relation to the principle that ‘the adaptation of the preaching of the revealed word must remain the law of all evangelisation. In this way, in fact, the ability of each people to express the message of Christ in its own way is stimulated, and at the same time a vital exchange between the Church and the different cultures of peoples is promoted’ (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 44);
- c) the reference to the particularity of ‘place’ and the requirements of ecclesial communion (at the different levels) in addressing the major moral and pastoral issues;
- d) the impact of migratory phenomena that represent “a reality that reshapes local Churches as intercultural communities. Often migrants and refugees, many of whom bear the wounds of uprooting, war and violence, become a source of renewal and enrichment for the communities that welcome them and an opportunity to establish direct links with geographically distant Churches” (SR 5d);
- e) the impact of the culture of the digital environment and new technologies on the notion of the ‘local’. For example, all relations and initiatives, including ecclesial ones, that take place online “have a scope and reach that extend beyond the traditionally understood territorial boundaries” (SR 17h);
- f) the canonical and pastoral issues opened up by the substantial migration of the faithful of the Catholic East to territories with a Latin majority, for which “it is necessary that the local Churches of the Latin rite, in the name of synodality, help the emigrated Eastern faithful to preserve their identity and cultivate their specific heritage, without undergoing processes of assimilation” (SR 6c).

#### 4. Some transversal points of reference

The deepening of the indicated perspectives can usefully refer to some principles that apply to each of them.

*The first principle is the mission of evangelisation as the driving force and raison d’être of the Church. The promotion of the figure and synodal dynamic of the Church has the purpose of credibly and effectively manifesting and supporting its mission, which is the ultimate criterion of all discernment. What is most effective in terms of the proclamation of the Gospel must be privileged, finding the courage to abandon what proves to be less useful or even an obstacle. It is this drive towards mission that ensures that the synodal process is not an exercise whereby the Church looks in the mirror and worries about its own balances but is projected towards the world and the whole of humanity, asking each member of the People of God to make his or her own irreplaceable contribution. The ecumenism of blood (cf. SR 7d) reminds us in a powerful way that witnessing to the Gospel to the point of giving one’s life is all the baptised, without distinction of confessional affiliation: it is, therefore, the common mission that constitutes the vector of the path towards Christian unity, starting from concrete forms of collaboration, which we must continue to promote and experiment.*

If the drive for mission is constitutive of the Church and marks every moment of her history, missionary challenges will change over time. An effort must, therefore, be made to discern those of today’s world: if we fail to identify and respond to them, our proclamation will lose relevance and attractiveness. Rooted in this need is the focus on young people, on digital culture, and the need to involve the poor and marginalised in the synodal process, bearers of a point of view capable of revealing social, economic and political dynamics that might otherwise remain hidden. Any changes in Church structures must be designed to be effective in responding to the challenges of mission in today’s world.

*The second principle is the promotion of participation in the mission, which is the gift and responsibility of all the baptised, in the active exercise of the sensus fidei and their respective charisms, in synergy with the exercise of the ministry of authority by the Bishops:*

“The circularity between the *sensus fidei* with which all the faithful are endowed, the discernment carried out at the different levels of the realisation of synodality, and the authority of those who exercise the pastoral ministry of unity and governance describes the dynamic of synodality. Such a circularity promotes the baptismal dignity and co-responsibility of all, enhances the presence of the charisms spread by the Holy Spirit in the People of God, recognises the specific ministry of the Pastors in collegial and hierarchical communion with the Bishop of Rome, and ensures that synodal processes and events take place in fidelity to the *depositum fidei* and in listening to the Holy Spirit for the renewal of the Church’s mission” (International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, n. 72).

Synodal dimension and hierarchical dimension are therefore not in competition. The tension that unites them is an important source of dynamism. In particular, decision-making processes are the place to creatively handle this tension so that each one is allowed to exercise its specific responsibility without being dispossessed of it.

*The third principle* is the articulation between local and universal, while considering the plurality and consistency of the intermediate levels. The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church exists in and from the local Churches (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 23) in communion with each other and with the Church of Rome. Each Church is, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, the community subject, convoked by the Word and edified by the Sacraments, in which the one People of God lives and walks in a specific cultural and social context, within which the gift of God is embodied. At the same time, each Church is called to share with all the others the gifts with which it is enriched. This is achieved through the ministry of its Bishop, the principle and guarantor of unity in the synodal participation of all in its mission, in collegial communion with the other Bishops *cum Petro and sub Petro* at the service of the whole Church (cf. International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, n. 61). Synodality therefore constitutes the appropriate ecclesial context

for understanding and promoting episcopal collegiality and describes the path to be followed to promote unity and catholicity in the discernment of ways forward in each Church and in the communion of Churches. What we are looking for is a way that is appropriate to today’s world to live unity in diversity, experiencing interconnectedness without crushing differences and peculiarities, but also without losing sight of the fact that some challenges—such as care for the common home, migration or digital culture—can only be taken up together.

*The fourth principle*, the one most radical and demanding but at the same time capable of giving hope and generativity, is *the exquisitely spiritual character of the synodal process*. Gathered together by God the Father, in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, sisters and brothers in the faith meet and listen to each other, each bringing the perspective and contribution of his or her own vocation, charisms and ministry received. This meeting and listening are not an end in themselves: they open up a space in which it becomes possible, together, to discern the voice of the Spirit and welcome his call. At all levels, we aim at the same result: to understand what the Lord is asking us to do and to be prepared to do it. The disciples’ task, indeed their very identity, is to follow the Master wherever he decides to go, to collaborate in a mission of salvation that is originally his.

## 5. Walking together towards October 2024

As the preparation for the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops advances, also thanks to the orientations formulated here, work continues on the other two guidelines identified from the *Synthesis Report* of the First Session.

The first guideline is to keep the synodal dynamic alive in the local Churches, so that an increasing number of people can experience it directly. We repeat the invitation to all the dioceses to reread the *Synthesis Report* in order to identify the most significant solicitations for their situation and, on

the basis of these, activate “the most appropriate initiatives to involve the entire People of God” (*Towards October 2024*, n. 2).

The second guideline consists in deepening, in a synodal manner, a series of issues of great importance, which “require to be dealt with at the level of the whole Church and in collaboration with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia” (*ibid.*, Introduction). Study Groups are being set up to set out the in-depth study of the themes identified, as better specified in the document *Study Groups for questions raised in the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be explored in collaboration with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia*, circulated at the same time as this one. “In addition, at the service of the synodal process in a broader sense, the General Secretariat of the Synod will activate a “permanent forum” to deepen the theological, canonical, pastoral, spiritual and communicative aspects of the Church’s synodality, also to respond to the request formulated by the SR “to promote, in appropriate forums, theological work of deepening the terminological and conceptual understanding of the notion and practice of synodality” (SR 1p). In carrying out this task, it will be assisted by the International Theological Commission and by a canonical Commission established at the service of the Synod in agreement with the Dicastery for Legislative Texts.

It is not possible to draw a clear dividing line between the subjects covered by the work of the many groups that have been activated: there are many connections, points of contact and even overlapping at different levels and along different axes. One of the tasks of the General Secretariat of the Synod is to ensure that the work proceeds in a coordinated manner and to listen to the results gradually achieved in the various areas so as to provide appropriate information to the Assembly Session in October 2024.

*Vatican, 14 March 2024*

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/03/14/240314g.html>

## LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO PARISH PRIESTS

*Dear Brother Priests,*

The International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod”, and the dialogue with all of you who have taken part, provide me with the opportunity to pray for the parish priests the world over. To all of you, I address these words with great affection.

It is so obvious as to sound almost banal, but that does not make it less true: the Church could not go on without your dedication and your pastoral service. So before all else, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the generous work that you do each day, sowing seeds of the Gospel in every kind of soil (cf. *Mk* 4:1-25).

As you have experienced in these days of sharing, the parishes in which you carry out your ministry vary widely, from those on the outskirts of great cities – as I know personally from Buenos Aires – to those in sparsely populated areas that are the size of vast provinces. They range from those in town centres in many European countries, where ancient basilicas house dwindling and aging communities, to those where celebrations are held beneath the branches of great trees and the songs of birds mix with the voices of small children.

Parish priests are well aware of this, since they know from within the life of God’s People their joys and hardships, their resources and their needs.



For this reason, a synodal Church needs its parish priests. Without priests, we will never be able to learn how to walk together and to set out on the path of synodality, “the path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium”.[1]

We will never become a synodal and missionary Church unless parish communities are distinguished by the sharing of all the baptized in the one mission of proclaiming the Gospel. If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither will the Church be. The Synthesis Report of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is very clear in this regard. Parishes, beginning with their structures and the organization of parish life, are called to think of themselves “primarily as being of service to the mission that the faithful carry out in society, in family life and the workplace, without concentrating exclusively on their own activities and their organizational needs” (8.1). Parish communities increasingly need to become places from which the baptized set out as missionary disciples and to which they return, full of joy, in order to share the wonders worked by the Lord through their witness (cf. *Lk* 10:17).

As pastors, we are called to accompany in this process the communities that we serve, and at the same time to commit ourselves with prayer, discernment and apostolic zeal in ensuring that our ministry is suited to the needs of a synodal and missionary Church. This challenge is set before the Pope, the bishops and the Roman Curia, and it is also set before you, as parish priests. The Lord who has called us and consecrated us asks us today to listen to the voice of his Spirit and to advance in the direction that he points out to us. Of one thing we can be sure: he will never leave us without his grace. Along the way, we will discover how to set our ministry

<sup>1</sup> *Address for the Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015.

free from the things that wear us down and rediscover its most authentic core, the proclamation of God’s word and the gathering of the community for the breaking of bread.

I encourage you, then, to accept this, the Lord’s call to be, as parish priests, builders of a synodal and missionary Church and to devote yourselves enthusiastically to achieving this goal. To this end, I would like to offer three suggestions that can help to inspire your lifestyle and activity as pastors.

1. I ask you first to live out your specific ministerial charism in ever greater service to the varied gifts that the Spirit sows in the People of God. It is urgent to “discover with faith, the many and varied charismatic gifts of the laity, be they of a humble or more exalted form” (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 9), which are indispensable for evangelizing any number of human situations and contexts. I am convinced that in this way you will bring to light many hidden treasures and feel less alone in the demanding task of evangelization. You will experience the joy of being true fathers, who do not dominate others but rather bring out in them, men and women alike, great and precious possibilities.

2. With all my heart, I suggest that you *learn to practise the art of communal discernment*, employing for this purpose the method of “conversation in the Spirit”, which has proved so helpful in the synodal journey and in the proceedings of the synodal Assembly itself. I am certain that you will reap from it many good fruits, not only in structures of communion such as parish councils, but in many other fields as well. As the Synthesis Report makes clear, discernment is a key element in the

pastoral activity of a synodal Church: “It is important that the practice of discernment be exercised also in pastoral settings, in a way adapted to differing contexts, in order to illumine the concreteness of ecclesial life. This will help to recognize better the charisms present within the community, to distribute wisely different responsibilities and ministries, and to plan in the light of the Spirit pastoral projects that go beyond the mere programming of activities” (2.1).

3. Finally, I would like to urge you to *base everything you do in a spirit of sharing and fraternity among yourselves and with your bishops*. This is something that emerged forcefully from the International Conference for the Permanent Formation of Priests, on the theme, “Fan into Flame the Gift of God that You Possess” (2 *Tim* 1:6), which took place last February here in Rome, with over 800 bishops, priests, lay and consecrated men and women, engaged in this area and representing some 18 countries. We cannot be authentic fathers unless we are first sons and brothers. And we cannot foster communion and participation in the communities entrusted to our care unless, before all else, we live out those realities among ourselves. I am quite aware that, amid the constant call of our pastoral responsibilities, this commitment may seem burdensome, even a waste of time, but the opposite is true: indeed, only in this way will we be credible and our activity not end up scattering what others have already gathered.

It is not only the synodal and missionary Church that needs parish priests, but also the ongoing process of the 2021-2024 Synod, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission”, as we look forward to the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will take place in the coming month of October. In order to prepare for it, we need to hear your voice.

For this reason, I invite those who have taken part in the International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod” to be missionaries of synodality, among yourselves and, once you return home, with your fellow parish priests. I ask you to encourage reflection, with a synodal and missionary mindset, on the renewal of the ministry of parish priests, and enable the General Secretariat of the Synod to gather your distinctive contributions in view of the preparation of the *Instrumentum Laboris*. The purpose of the present International Meeting was to listen to parish priests, but that cannot finish today: we need to continue to hear from you.

Dear brothers, I am at your side in this process, in which I myself am taking part. I bless all of you from the heart, and in turn, I need to feel your closeness and the support of your prayers. Let us entrust ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary *Hodegetria*, Our Lady of the Way. She shows us the way; she leads us to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 2 May 2024*

FRANCIS

Mandate of the Holy Father Francis to Parish Priests on the occasion of the International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod” (2 May 2024)

### **Mandate to Parish Priests**

*I have something to ask of you, who have come here representing parish priests the world over: we need your help to continue to listen to the voice of parish priests in view of the Second Session of the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. This meeting has been very important, but it is not enough: we must do more if we want to make a larger number of parish priests enter into the synodal dynamism. And this cannot be done only by the General Secretariat of the Synod and the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia who have organized this meeting.*

*Therefore, I ask you today to become missionaries of synodality with your brother parish priests, once you return home: inspiring reflection on the renewal of the ministry of the parish priest in a synodal and missionary light, promoting moments of conversation in the Spirit among parish priests, in person or online, making the most of the opportunity of meetings that are already organized, or organizing one for the purpose. And then, I ask you to inform the Secretariat of the Synod of the fruits of these meetings, following the directions that will be given*

*to you. As you return home, speak about this idea with your bishops and with the episcopal Conferences, and tell them too that it is a task given to you by the Pope.*

*For my part, I have written a letter to all parish priests throughout the world to inform them of this initiative, and to present you as missionaries of synodality among them. Now I will sign it, and then a copy will be consigned to each one of you, so that you can distribute it once you return home.*

*Thank you for your collaboration. I will accompany you with my prayer, and you too, please do not forget to pray for me.*

### **FRANCIS**

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/05/08/240508f.html>



# 2024

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