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教宗方濟各 照料受造界祈禱日文告

2023年9月1日

親愛的弟兄姊妹們：

「願正義與和平湧流」是今年教會大公合一受造界時期的主題，其靈感來自於亞毛斯先知的話：「願公道如水常流，正義像川流不息的江河！」（亞五 24）

亞毛斯那詩情畫意的圖像，向我們訴說了天主的渴求。我們是天主以祂的肖像而造的兒女，天主渴望正義能掌權，因為正義原是我們生命的本質，就如同水對於我們實際生存所需一樣，不可或缺。正義必須伸張，正義不能隱藏在地下深處，也不能在滋養我們之前如水般蒸發殆盡。天主希望我們每一個人竭力在各方面都追求公平及正義，以祂的律法而生活，因而使生命朝氣蓬勃。當我們先尋求天主的國（參閱：瑪六 33），並與天主、人類及大自然間保持一個正當的關係，那麼正義及和平就能夠像川流不息的江河般孕育人類及所有的受造物。

2022年7月一個美麗的夏日，在前往加拿大朝聖時，我在艾伯特省的聖亞納湖邊沉思此事。那湖曾是原住民好幾世代的朝聖地。鼓聲在我身旁不斷地迴響著，我心想：「不知有多少人被生

命的重擔壓迫著，並帶著一顆焦急渴望的心來到這裡，他們在這水中感到安慰，並找到力量繼續前行！在這裡，沉浸在受造界中，我們也能感受到另一股跳動：那是大地慈母般的心跳。一如嬰兒的心跳在母胎中與母親的心跳和諧一致，人的成長也是這樣，我們生命的節律，需要與孕育我們生命的受造界節律同步一致。」¹

在這受造界時期中，讓我們停下腳步，聆聽這些心跳聲——我們自己的、我們母親的、祖母的、受造界的，以及天主的心跳聲。現今，這些心不再和諧地跳動，不再充滿正義與和平的和諧。我們有太多的弟兄姊妹們無法再暢飲這股洪流的水。因此，讓我們留神聆聽那呼喊，要我們站在受到環境及氣候不公義對待的受害者身旁，並熄滅那打擊受造界毫無道理的戰火。

我們在無數正乾枯的河流中，看到這場戰爭所帶來的後果。教宗本篤十六世曾鄭重地說：「由於在人們心中的沙漠已變得如此廣闊，在世上外在的沙漠也因此逐漸增長。」² 消費者的貪婪為自私的心所驅動，正破壞這星球的水循環；化石燃料不加以管制地使用及雨林的破壞，正不斷推高全球平均氣溫並引致巨大旱災；令人擔憂的水資源短缺問題，日益影響小型農村社區及大都市。另外，工業如掠食者般正透過極端的手段，像是水利壓裂法及天然氣的開採、不受環評檢驗的巨型採礦計畫，以及大量的動物養殖產業等，不斷耗盡和汙染我們乾淨的水源。如同亞西西的聖方濟所說的，我們的「水姊妹」被掠奪了，成了一種「受市場規律控制的商品。」（參閱：《願祢受讚頌》，30）

聯合國政府間氣候變遷專門委員會（IPCC）曾指出，迫切地立即採取行動，能保證我們不會錯過機會，使我們創造更能永續經營正義的世界。我們可以且必須去阻止最糟的事情發生。

「的確，可以做的事情真的很多」（參閱：《願祢受讚頌》，180），

1. 參閱：教宗方濟各在聖亞納湖的彌撒講道，加拿大，2022年7月26日。

2. 教宗本篤十六世於伯多祿牧職隆重就職典禮的講道，梵蒂岡，2005年4月24日。

只要我們能夠如同許多河川、溪流及小溪般匯聚在一起，最終，就成為一股洪流，灌溉了這壯觀且美麗的星球上的生命，及將來好幾世代的人類家庭。所以讓我們牽起我們的手並勇敢地同步前行，好使正義及和平湧流到世界各地。

在這個受造界時期，我們如何為正義與和平的洪流作出貢獻？尤其是我們作為基督徒團體，可以做些什麼來治癒我們共同的家園，讓它再次充滿生機？為此，我們必須決定改變我們的心、我們的生活型態，以及管轄我們社會的公共政策。

首先，要讓我們的心轉變，使它加入這股洪流。如果我們要其他任何轉變發生，我們就先要有心的轉變。這就是教宗聖若望保祿二世所鼓勵我們去擁抱的「生態歸依」：我們與受造界之間的關係需要更新，讓我們不再看到受造界是被剝削的對象，相反地，我們要守護它，視它為來自造物主的神聖禮物。此外，我們必須了解，一項尊重環境的完整計畫包含四種關係：我們與天主、與我們現在及未來的弟兄姊妹、與整個大自然，以及與我們本身。

至於第一種關係，教宗本篤十六世曾提到，需要認出「創造」及「救贖」兩者不可分離的迫切性：「這位救世主是造物主，而我們若不宣認天主在祂完滿的偉大中同時是造物主及救世主，我們就同時否認了救贖的價值。」³「創造」指的是天主那充滿奧祕且宏偉的行動，從虛無當中創造了這個壯觀且美麗的星球和宇宙，同時也指出從這創造行動不斷延伸的結果——讓我們經驗到這一份永不枯竭的禮物。在這「受造界大殿」的禮儀與個人祈禱中，⁴讓我們回想起這位偉大的藝術家，祂創造了如此美麗的世界，並讓我們反思這份奧祕，即天主出於愛而選擇了創造宇宙。

第二，讓我們透過轉變我們的生活型態，來加入這股洪流的浪潮。我們要懺悔我們「生態的罪」，正如我的弟兄——巴爾多祿茂宗主

3. 教宗本篤十六世在布雷薩諾內主教座堂的談話，義大利，2008年8月6日。

4. 〈照料造界祈禱日文告〉：「聆聽受造界的呼聲」，2022年7月21日。

教——所提醒的，以對造物主和祂的受造物充滿感激的讚嘆作為開始。這些生態的罪傷害了自然界和我們的弟兄姊妹。在天主恩寵的助祐下，讓我們採取一種減少浪費及無謂消費的生活型態，特別是當產品製造的過程有毒且無法永續經營。讓我們儘量注意到我們的習慣及經濟上的決定，好讓萬有，包括各地的弟兄姊妹，以及未來的子孫，都能夠生存。讓我們在天主持續的創造工程中，透過積極的正面選擇來一起合作：在愉逸中適度且有節制地使用資源，處理和回收廢物，優先選擇對環境友善，並以對社會大眾負責任方式製造的產品和提供的服務。

最後，為了讓這這股洪流奔流不息，我們必須轉變管理我們社會及塑造今後青年人生活的公共政策——使少數人暴富，卻使大多數人的生活一日不如一日的經濟政策，導致了和平及正義的終結。顯而易見的，較富裕的國家已背上了必須償還的「生態債務」（參閱：《願祢受讚頌》，51）⁵。在今年11月30日至12月12日將於杜拜舉行的2023年聯合國氣候變遷高峰會議（COP28）中，世界各國的領袖必須要聆聽科學界的聲音，並且要制訂一個快速且公正的轉型方針，以終結化石燃料的世代。根據在《巴黎公約》所許下遏止全球暖化的承諾，持續開採化石燃料及擴增其建設，這做法是逆天行事。讓我們提高我們的聲量，以免窮人及我們的孩子承受不義的惡果，因為他們將承受氣候變遷所帶來最嚴重的後果。我呼籲所有善心人士以符合社會正義及大自然呼聲的態度來採取行動。

與此一脈相連的另一個願景，就是天主教會實踐同道偕行的承諾。今年，受造界時期為9月1日至10月4日，結束日期正是亞西西的聖方濟紀念日，剛好與共議性的世界主教代表會議的開幕接軌。如同大自然中的河流，由無數細小的溪流及較大的溪流、河川形成，在2021年10月開始的共議性的進程，邀請了所有那

5. 「真正的『生態債務』確實存在，特別是在南北兩半球之間，其原因是與因商業失衡而影響環境生態，及某些國家長期不成比例地使用天然資源有關連。」（《願祢受讚頌》，51）

些在個人或團體層面參與的人，一起融入這股反省及更新洪流。全體天主子民都被邀請進入這個共議性的對話及歸依之旅。

如同一個流域有許多大大小小的支流，教會的共融同樣地是由無數地方教會、信仰團體與善會所形成，全部都靠汲取同樣的水而得到滋養。每一個水源皆增添了它獨特且不可取代的貢獻，直到所有的水源匯集至天主慈悲之愛的汪洋大海中。就像一條河流是它周遭的生命之源，同樣地，我們共議性的教會也必定是我們共同的家園與所有居民的生命泉源。如同一條河流帶給各種動、植物生命，共議性的教會也必須播種正義與和平，為了要把生命帶給所有她所接觸到的每一個地方。

2022年的7月在加拿大，在那裡我想起加里肋亞湖——耶穌帶給許多人醫治及安慰的地方，並在那裡宣講了「愛的革命」。我得知聖亞納湖也是一個充滿醫治、安慰與愛的地方，它提醒我們「如果手足情誼使我們與其他在遠處的人連接起來，這份手足情誼便是真實的，以及這來自天堂的合一並不畏懼差異，反而邀請我們彼此共融，在差異中共融，好能再次一起出發，因我們所有人——全體！——都是在旅途中同行的朝聖者。」⁶

在這受造界時期，身為跟隨基督的人，在此共享的共議性的旅程中，讓我們一同生活、工作與祈禱，為使我們共同的家園能夠再次充滿生機。願聖神再次盤旋在水面上，引領我們致力「使大地煥然一新。」（詠一〇四 30）

教宗 方濟各

羅馬，拉特朗聖若望大殿，2023年5月13日

（天主教會臺灣地區主教團 恭譯）

6. 教宗方濟各在聖亞納湖的講道，加拿大，2022年7月26日。

教宗方濟各

第109屆世界移民及難民日文告

2023年9月24日

自由選擇遷徙或留下

親愛的弟兄姊妹們：

我們這時代的移民潮展現出一個複雜且環環相扣的現象為了正確地了解這個現象，我們需要仔細地分析它不同階段的每一個面向 從原鄉到異地，甚至包括重回故鄉的可能性。為了對此作出一些貢獻，我決定以本屆世界移民及難民日的文告，探討一個人在決定離開自己祖國時，理應擁有的自由。

幾年前，「自由離開、自由留下」是義大利主教團用來促進精誠關懷的主題，具體回應當代移民潮所帶來的挑戰。透過悉心聆聽每個地區教會，我可以定論說，離開或留下的自由，已是一種普遍和廣為人所接納的牧靈關懷方式。

「上主的天使託夢顯於若瑟說：『起來，帶著嬰孩和祂的母親逃往埃及去，住在那裡，直到我再通知你，因為黑落德即將尋找這嬰孩，要把祂殺掉』」（瑪二 13）。聖家逃亡到埃及，就如以色列歷史中許多的遷徙一樣，都不是自由的決定。遷徙與否的決定應該恆為自由的，但在許多時候，即使是在我們這個時代，並非如此。數以百萬的人民因為衝突、天災，或單純因為無法在本國過著一個有尊嚴、有發展的生活，而被迫離鄉背井。早在2003年，教宗聖若望保祿二世就曾說過：「對移民與難民而言，建立和平的具體條件，就是首先要認真致力於保障不移民的權利，即可以在自己的國家度著和平且有尊嚴的生活。」（〈第九十屆世界移民及難民日文告〉，3）

雅各伯和他所有的孩子們「帶了家畜和在客納罕地積聚的財物，一同向埃及進發」（創四十六 6）。嚴重的饑荒迫使雅各伯和全家到埃及避難，在那裡，他的兒子若瑟確保了他們的生存。在今天，人們被迫遷徙最明顯可見的原因，就是迫害、戰爭、環境災害和嚴重的貧窮。遷徙者因為貧窮、恐懼或絕望而逃難。為了要消除這些肇因，並藉此消除被迫遷徙這件事情，我們需要所有人依照自己的責任，共同承諾採取行動。首先，是問我們自己可以做什麼？相對地，應該停止做什麼？我們必須盡一切努力去停止軍備競賽、經濟殖民主義、掠奪他人資源，以及對我們共同家園的毀壞。

「凡信了的人，常齊集一處，一切所有皆歸公用。他們把產業和財物變賣，按照每人的需要分配」（宗二 44~45）。早期基督徒團體的理想與今日的現實看起來是多麼遙遠！為了讓移民成為一個真正自由的選擇，我們必須努力讓所有人都在公益中獲得平等的分享，能夠讓自己的基本權利得到尊重，並獲得完整、符合人性的發展。唯有如此，我們才能夠向每個人提供一個有尊嚴、有意義的人生——無論是為個人，或是在家庭中。顯然，遷徙者的祖國及其領導者負有最主要的責任，他們受揀選去施行德政——透明公開、誠實、有遠見，並且為所有人服務，特別是為那些最弱小的人。他們也必須要有條件來成就這一切，同時不會讓自己的自然和人力資源被剝奪一空，並且不受其他國家勢力的干預，而其目的是謀求少數人的利益。當環境讓人考慮是否要遷徙的時候，我們必須確保當事人作出決定時，有足夠完整的資訊並且經過深思熟慮，以避免為數眾多的男人、女人和孩子們，被危險的假象或不擇手段的人口販子所蒙騙。

「在這禧年內，人各歸其祖業。」（肋廿五 13）。對以色列百姓而言，慶祝禧年是展現一個伸張集體正義（collective justice）的行為：「藉著債務的免除、土地的歸還，每個人都能回到他們原來的生活狀態，並且再次享有屬於天主子民的自由。」（教宗方濟各，公開接見教理講授，2016年2月10日）。正值我們邁向2025年的禧年之

際，應該記得慶祝禧年的這個面向。個別的國家和整個國際群體都應保障每個人可以享有不被強迫遷徙的權利，意即有權利在自己的國家中度一個和平且有尊嚴的生活。這個權利雖然尚未成為法律上的條文，但鑑於它的重要性確實是極為根本的，所以面對超越國界的共同利益，保障此權利需要被視為所有國家的共同責任。確實，世界的資源並非無限，經濟方面較為貧窮之國家的發展有賴於我們在所有國家中所產生的共享能力。只要這個權利尚未得到保障——將是很漫長的一個過程——許多人仍然會被迫離鄉背井，為了尋找更好的生活。

「因為我餓了，你們給了我吃的；我渴了，你們給了我喝的；我作客，你們收留了我；我赤身露體，你們給了我穿的；我患病，你們看顧了我；我在監裡；你們來探望了我。」（瑪廿五 35~36）。這番話不斷勸勉我們，讓我們在遷徙者身上不僅看到一個處於困難中的弟兄或姊妹，而是看到基督本身——祂正在敲我們的門。

因此，一方面我們要努力確保每一位遷徙者的決定都是自由的，另一方面我們也要對每一位遷徙者的尊嚴予以最高的尊重；這代表著，要盡量合宜地陪伴和管理每一波的移民潮、建造橋梁而非高牆、為安全和定期的遷徙群體擴張管道。無論我們決定在哪裡建立我們的未來，無論是在祖國或他鄉，最重要的，是一定要有一個準備好接納人、保護人、幫助人和能使人融入、不歧視、不排除任何人的團體。

教會所採取的同道偕行的歷程，讓我們在那些最脆弱者身上——其中許多是遷徙者和難民——看到我們是道路上獨特的旅伴，我們該如同弟兄姊妹般地愛護和照顧他們。只有一起共同前行，我們才能夠走得長遠，並且抵達我們旅途的共同終點。

教宗 方濟各

羅馬，拉特朗聖若望大殿，2023年5月11日

祈禱文

天主，全能的天父，
 請賜給我們恩寵，使我們努力不懈地
 致力於維護正義、精誠團結與和平，
 好使祢所有的子女都享有
 決定要遷徙或留下的自由。
 請賜給我們勇氣
 去揭露這世界上所有的醜陋惡行，
 消除一切損害祢受造物的美麗
 及我們共同家園和諧的不義。
 藉著聖神的力量，求扶助我們，
 好使祢放在我們道路上的遷徙者，
 我們都能向他們每一位展現祢的溫柔，
 並在每個人心中和各種環境之下，
 傳播相遇與關懷的文化。

(天主教會臺灣地區主教團 恭譯)



教宗方濟各 2023普世傳教節文告 「心靈火熱，踏足前行」

(參閱：路廿四13~35)

親愛的弟兄姊妹們：

為今年的普世傳教節，由路加福音中有關厄瑪烏兩位門徒的敘述中得到啟發（參閱：路廿四 13~35），我選擇了這一主題：心靈火熱，踏足前行。兩位門徒感到困惑和失望，但與基督在聖言和擘餅中相遇，點燃了他們心中的熱火，於是再次出發前往耶路撒冷，宣布主真的復活了！在福音的敘述中，我們透過一些引人矚目的畫面領悟到門徒們的轉變：他們由於耶穌講解聖經而心靈火熱，他們睜開眼睛認出了祂，最終，踏足前行。讓我們默想傳教使徒行程的以下三點描述，希望我們能在今天的世界裡重新激起傳播福音的熱忱。

1. 當祂向我們講解聖經的時候「心靈火熱」；天主聖言在傳教中啟迪並改變人心。

從耶路撒冷到厄瑪烏的路上，由兩位門徒的臉上可以看出，他們非常難過，因為他們所相信的耶穌已經死了（參閱：路廿四17）。面對被釘在十字架上師傅的失敗，他們認為耶穌是默西亞的希望破滅了。（參閱：路廿四21）

請看「他們正在談話討論的時候，耶穌親自走近，與他們同行」（路廿四 15）。就如門徒們在被召叫之初，如今在他們迷惑不解的時刻，主也主動接近他們並與他們同行。祂無限慈悲，即使我們有缺點、疑惑及軟弱，且憂傷和悲觀使我們的心變得「無知和遲鈍」（參閱：路廿四 25），成為小信德的人，祂也從不厭倦與我們同在。

今天，如同當初一樣，復活的主靠近祂的傳教使徒，尤其是當他們感到迷失、灰心，以及因經歷那令他們窒息的不義奧祕而害怕時，主走近他們身邊。因此，「不可讓自己的望德被奪走！」（《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，86）。上主完全能解決我們的問題，尤其是我們向世界宣揚福音時遇到的那些問題，因為這一使命畢竟是祂的，我們只是祂卑微的合作者，「無用的僕人。」（路十七 10）

我願向世界上所有的傳教士，特別是那些正經歷困難時刻的傳教士們，表達我在基督內的親近：親愛的諸位，復活的主一直與你們同在，祂看到你們在遙遠的地方為福傳使命所作的慷慨犧牲。生命中的每一天並非都充滿陽光，但是，讓我們永遠記住主耶穌在受難前對祂的朋友們說的話：「在世界上你們要受苦難；然而你們放心，我已戰勝了世界！」（若十六 33）

在聆聽了前往厄瑪烏的兩位門徒對話後，復活的耶穌「從梅瑟和眾先知開始，把全部經書論及祂的話，都給他們解釋了」（路廿四 27）。門徒們的心再次被點燃，他們最終互相傾訴：「當祂在路上與我們談話，給我們講解聖經的時候，我們的心不是火熱的嗎？」（路廿四 32）。因為耶穌是生活的聖言，只有祂能點燃、啟迪和改變人心。

因此，我們更能理解聖熱羅尼莫所說的：「不認識聖經就是不認識基督」（《依撒意亞先知書詮釋》，序言：PL 24, 17B）。「如果沒有引領我們的主，我們就不可能深入了解聖經，反之亦然：如果沒有聖經，就無法解讀耶穌和祂的教會在世界中的使命」

（《開啟他們的明悟》手諭，1）。所以，認識聖經對基督徒的生活很重要，對宣揚基督和祂的福音更是如此。否則，除了傳給別人自己的想法和計畫，還有什麼可以宣傳？一顆冰冷的心能讓他人的心燃燒起來嗎？

為此，讓復活的主永遠伴隨我們，讓祂向我們詮釋聖經的涵義。我們請祂使我們的心燃燒起來，啟迪並改變我們，以便我們能以來自祂聖神的力量和智慧，向世界宣揚祂救贖的奧祕。

2. 在擘餅時「開了眼睛認出祂來」；聖體中的耶穌是傳教使命的泉源和頂峰。

被天主聖言燃燒的心，使厄瑪烏的兩位門徒在傍晚時，要求那位神祕的旅行者與他們一起住下。當他們一起用餐，祂擘餅時，他們的眼睛開了，認出祂來。使徒們睜開眼睛的決定性因素，是耶穌所完成的一系列動作：拿起餅來，祝福了，擘開，遞給他們。這些都是猶太家主的日常行為，但是，耶穌基督以聖神的恩寵來完成，祂為這兩位共餐者重現了增餅，尤其是聖體的標記，即十字架上的祭獻與犧牲。然而，在他們認識到擘餅者就是耶穌的那一刻，「祂卻由他們眼前隱沒了」（路廿四 31）。這一事實使我們理解到信仰的一個基本現實：擘餅的基督現在成為被擘開的餅，供門徒享用，被他們領受。祂成為不可見的，因為祂現在已經進入門徒心中，使他們的心愈加燃燒，促使他們毫不遲疑地再次出發，將與復活者相遇的獨特經驗，分享給所有的人！為此，復活的基督是擘餅者，同時也是為我們而成為被擘開的餅。所以，每個傳教使徒都被要求像耶穌一樣，並在祂內，因聖神的行動，為世界成為擘餅者且成為被擘開的餅。

在這方面，必須牢記，以基督的名義給飢餓的人只是簡純地擘開物質的麵包，已經是一種基督徒的傳教行為。擘開基督聖體，更是卓越的傳教行動，因為聖體是教會生活與使命的泉源和頂峰。

教宗本篤十六世提醒我們：「我們不能把我們在聖體聖事中慶祝的愛自我保留。其本質是要求傳達給所有人。世界所需要的是天主的愛，是與基督會晤並相信祂。這就是為什麼聖體不僅是教會生活，而且是教會使命的源泉和頂點：一個真正的聖體教會是一個傳教的教會。」（《愛的聖事》宗座勸諭，84）

為了結出果實，我們必須與祂合一（參閱：若十五 4~9）。而這種結合是透過日常的祈禱，特別是朝拜聖體，在主面前保持靜默來實現的，主在聖體中與我們同在。以愛培育我們與基督的共融，傳教使徒可以作為有行動的神祕者。當黑夜將近時，厄瑪烏兩位門徒強留主說：「請同我們一起住下吧！」（路廿四 29）。受這兩位門徒的熱切懇求所啟發，也希望我們的心永遠渴望耶穌的陪伴。

3. 走在路上，帶著喜悅講述復活的基督；不斷走出去的教會將永保年輕。

門徒們睜開眼睛，在「擘餅」中認出了耶穌，就「毫不遲疑地出發，回到了耶路撒冷」（參閱：路廿四 33）。這種匆忙前往，向他人分享與主相遇的喜樂，表明「福音的喜樂源於耶穌，凡與祂相知相遇的人，其心靈和生命必充滿這喜樂。凡接受祂救恩的人，必從罪惡、悲哀、內在空虛和孤獨中被解救出來。與基督一起，喜樂就會生生不息」（《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，1）。真正與復活的耶穌相遇的人，他的心就不能不被與眾人分享的這一渴望所燃燒，因此，第一且重要的傳教資源是那些在聖經和聖體中認出復活的基督的人，在他們的心中有祂的熱火，在他們的眼中有祂的光。即使在最困難的情況和最黑暗的時刻，他們都會為永不消逝的生命作見證。

「踏足前行」的圖像再次提醒我們，萬民福傳的使命世代有效，這是復活的主賦予教會的使命，為向每個人及每一民族傳播福音，直到地極。今日，被如此眾多的不義、分裂和戰爭所傷害的人類，比以往任何時候都更需要基督和平及救贖的福音。因此，我藉此機會重

申「每一個人都有領受福音的權利，基督徒有責任向所有人宣講福音。宣講時與其擺出把新誡律強加於人的姿態，倒不如心懷與人分享喜樂的誠意，指出美的境界，邀請人們出席甘美的盛宴」（《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，14）。傳教的歸依仍然必須成為個人和團體為自己設定的主要目標，因此「外出傳教是教會所有活動的典範。」（《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，15）

正如聖保祿宗徒所說，基督的愛吸引並推動著我們（參閱：格後五 14）。這裡是一個雙重愛的問題：基督的愛吸引、激發並喚起我們對祂的愛。而正是這種愛，使走出去的教會永保年輕，其所有成員一起去宣揚基督的福音，我們深信「祂為眾人死，使活著的人不再為自己生活，而是為替他們死而復活的那位生活」（格後五 15）。任何人都能為這傳教運動作出貢獻：用祈禱和行動，用金錢和痛苦的奉獻，用自身的見證。宗座傳信善會是鼓勵這種精神和物質層面上傳教合作的特殊媒介，正因如此，普世傳教節的募捐是專門為宗座傳信善會而設立。

教會傳教行動的緊迫性，當然需要其所有成員在各個層面上進行更密切的傳教合作。這是同道偕行進程的一個根本目標，且教會正以共融、參與及使命為宗旨來實現它。當然，這個過程並非是教會自我封閉；也不是像議會那樣透過民主投票並根據人的喜好來決定是否值得信仰和實踐。而是像厄瑪烏的門徒一樣出發，聆聽復活的主，因為祂總是在我們中間，向我們解釋聖經的意義並為我們擘餅，使我們能夠以聖神的力量，在世界中繼續祂的使命。

就像那兩位門徒向其他人講述路上所發生的事情一樣（參閱：路廿四 35），我們的宣告也將是講述主基督、祂的生命、苦難、死亡和復活及祂的愛在我們生命中所創造的奇事的喜樂講述。在與復活者的相遇中獲得啟迪，並被祂的聖神鼓勵後，讓我們也因此再次出發。

讓我們帶著火熱的心出發，睜開雙眼，踏足前行，用上主的聖言點燃人心，讓他人也睜開眼睛認出聖體中的耶穌，並邀請眾人偕行於上主在基督內賜給人類的和平與救贖的道路上。

聖母瑪利亞——旅途中保、基督傳教使徒之母及傳教之后，為我等祈！

教宗 方濟各

羅馬，拉特朗聖若望大殿

2023年1月6日，主顯節

(信仰通訊社恭譯，天主教會臺灣地區主教團版本)



第十六屆世界主教代表會議 《工作文件》語言表達的訊息

有關《工作文件》（簡稱：《文件》）

- 雖然不是一份綜合報告，這份《工作文件》是結合從2021年起，在聆聽全體天主子民階段所得的所有資料，以及大洲階段的《最終文件》而成。因此，它的出版，有兩個意義。首先，世界主教代表會議「以共融、參與以使命來體現一個共議性的教會」第一階段的結束；以及第二階段的——那慶祝性的——分為兩個會期的第十六屆世界主教代表會議大會第一期的揭幕。
- 《文件》可以被視為第一階段的終點；然而，第一階段的終點並不表示聆聽及辨明天主子民過程已有結論。
- 《文件》不是一份教會學的手冊。在準備〈大洲階段工作文件〉裡所寫的，可以在此引用：「這並非是教會訓導的一份文件，也不是一份社會學的調查報告、也不是要提供一些運作公式的指南或目標、或是從神學的角度來完整地闡述。」應該說，《文件》是一種經驗的果實：同一信仰內弟兄姊妹之間的誠心及親切相遇，是一種喜樂的經驗。另一方面，如同教宗方濟各提醒說：「共議精神」這議題並非教會學的其中一個課題，更不是一個流行語，一個口號，或一個濫用於我們聚會的新名詞。絕不是這樣！「共議精神」顯示出教會的本質，她的形式，她的作風和她的使命。」〈教宗方濟各向羅馬教區信友致詞〉，2021年9月18日)

- 《文件》並未提出建議性的答案，也不能解讀為10月份全體代表會議所要產生的最終文件的初稿，以便在會議中修訂。事實上，共議性的歷程目的「不是要製作各式文件，而是為實現教會的使命和開展充滿希望的視野。」（〈大洲階段工作文件〉，6）
- 《文件》是辨明的工具。此《文件》被視為預備成為在10月份主教代表大會中實用及服務的工具。因此，它闡明經由聆聽全體天主子民一連串的問題之後所列出的優先項目，提供大會反省及辨明，旨在認辨出的一些具體步驟，為能學習如何深化當今教會的共議性的方法和風格。
- 《文件》的參考重點是來自地方教會——神學與領了洗的人具體經驗同行的地方。在《文件》中所列出的問題，豐富地表達了地方教會的實際狀況。這些問題來自信友實際的參與，有名有姓，有具體的面容。他們見證了天主子民的信仰經驗，也印證了這文件代表的非凡意涵。

《工作文件》見證了什麼？

- 具有生命力的教會經驗：在信仰內弟兄姊妹之間真誠與親切的相遇經驗是喜樂的泉源。這使我們親手碰觸到普世及大公的教會，在各個年齡層、性別及不同社會處境中體現教會的不同聖召，以及在不同語言、文化、禮儀舉行方式及神學傳統裡，所蘊含的神恩的多元性及非凡的寶藏。
- 從經驗察覺到教會日漸成共議性的教會，這認知代表我們的身分及召叫：一起同行，實踐同道偕行是成為耶穌真正的門徒及同伴。耶穌親自說：「我是道路」（若十四6）。「經驗到這是主的恩寵，也願繼續同行」，在今日這也成為我們深切的渴望。
- 若不從共融的角度去看，人們便無法理解共議性的教會的傳教使命，即在人生的每一個範圍和領域裡宣布及體現福音。

教會的共融及使命首先藉著參與聖體聖事而獲得滋養，也透過機構、組織以及過程，在共同洗禮的尊嚴，在使命內，共同擔負起責任，不僅重新得到肯定，也得以鍛鍊及實踐。

- 在我們這個世代，開放及不安於現狀的教會，極為重要。教宗方濟各提醒我們，如果一個基督徒沒有感覺到這種心緒不寧，如果他沒有把它活出來，一定少了什麼東西。心緒不寧，是從個人的信仰而來的，它令我們衡量做什麼更好，什麼該保持，什麼該改變。歷史告訴我們，原地不動對教會並不好（《福音的喜樂》，23）。這移動是順從聖神的結果，祂才是這故事的編導，當中各人都是心緒不寧的主角，總不停頓下來。千萬別原地不動（參閱：〈教宗方濟各向羅馬教區信友致詞〉，2021年9月18日）！
- 大公合一之旅的重要性：這是個具有創造性及更新普世大公合一主義，並且要激發大公合一性的對話。教宗方濟各提及在他與東方亞述教會阿瓦三世（Mar Awa III）宗主教致詞談話時說到：「天主教會正在走的，同道偕行的途徑，必須要是合一的，合一的途徑就是同道偕行。」
- 在全世界各地不同的教會有其不同的特殊情況及經驗：太多導致世界沾滿鮮血的戰爭實況，要求我們要努力重建正義與和平；氣候變遷帶來的威脅，也意味著有必要優先照料我們的共同家園；對剝削、不平等和丟棄文化的經濟體系作出抗議；以及抵制壓制少數群體的殖民主義和同質化壓力；迫害及折磨移民的情況逐漸使種種的團體消失瓦解，危害著那些已在偷生苟活的人民；地方教會也提到他們所關心的，就是如何裝備自己以應對迫切的社會情況，從現時全球普遍的文化多元性，到那些代表他們居住國家中分散的少數民族的教會團體經驗，以及我們必須正視和因應的、越來越激進，甚至極度世俗化的經驗，這種世俗化心態似乎認為宗教經驗無

關重要，但人類仍然對福音有所渴求。很多地方教會深受各種的欺凌侮辱的形式——包括性侵害，以及權力、良知和財富的濫用——所造成的危機影響，這些都是敞開未癒合的傷口，教會除了對受害者和倖存者所造成的痛苦悔改外，還須承諾作出轉變和改革，以避免類似情況再度發生。

- 共議性的方法論極為重要，為了能落實教會同道偕行（共議精神）的風格與動力——將重心藉著靈修交談放在聆聽上，尤其是為訓練對那些有能力陪伴團體的協調人去幫助其他人具有創造力地活出同道偕行（共議精神）的動力與張力。
- 面對及處理緊張局面的能力，為的是擁抱分歧及走向合一。
- 在教會內的多項整合，包含各個神恩與職責，超越劃一的一致性、零碎化、兩極分化的問題：「共議精神的活力，是一個將這些連貫各個神恩與職責，並強化它們，但而不使它們變成劃一性的一致。」
- 一個有能力擁抱脆弱及不完美的教會。
- 重要的是，從現在看得更遠，到末世的幅度。
- 禮儀更新的需要，要能夠兼容並蓄，能激勵年輕人，也能保留禮儀的本質及象徵。禮儀是教會的核心生活，首要及最重要的是，聖體聖事是基督徒生命的泉源及高峰。
- 需要能夠處理真理及慈悲之間的張力——等待被教會接納，同時又真正地、忠誠地接受教會教導兩者之間的張力。

關於第十六屆世界主教代表常務會議大會

- 大會的目標將會是在教會日常生活中重新啟動和體現共議性的進程，同時認辨出聖神邀請我們在哪些路線上更堅定地前行。這是教會同行的動力，一直忠於主耶穌託付給我們的使命，也是在下一個會期要祈求的果實。共議性的進程確實「不

是要製作各式文件，而是為實現教會的使命和開展充滿希望的視野。」《大洲階段工作文件》，6)

- 2023年10月的大會中也要深切聆聽教會在生活中執行它的使命的情況。

同道偕行（共議精神）的概述

- 同道偕行是學習的過程。
- 同道偕行考慮到我們的處境，每個人的出發點都不同。
- 同道偕行是漸進式的過程，是一步步的轉變。
- 同道偕行是在行動中學習。
- 同道偕行是一條具有創造力及開放式的途徑。
- 同道偕行是一種以聖神為核心的靈性經驗。
- 同道偕行是一門藝術，知道如何評估、接納以及呈現所有上主賜予教會的神恩與禮物。
- 這次的世界主教代表會議是一個賦予所有領了洗的人傳教使命權柄的過程。
- 這次世界主教代表會議是一個經由聆聽而認出彼此的過程。
- 這次的世界主教代表會議是接續第二次梵蒂岡大公會議的一種方式。

（天主教會臺灣地區主教團祕書處 譯）

第十六屆世界主教代表會議

世界主教會議秘書長 格雷奇樞機通函

梵蒂岡，2023年9月12日

Prot. No. 230380

親愛的主教弟兄們：

「2021年10月教宗方濟各召開了世界主教代表會議，自此以來，全體天主子民便動身同道偕行。」（《工作文件》，1）現在，我們已經達到了這段始於諮詢天主子民的過程的一個重要里程碑。再過幾天，即10月4日，教宗將召開第十六屆世界主教代表常務會議大會的第一會期，主題為「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」。

「沒有祈禱，就沒有同道偕行。」（教宗2022年10月祈禱意向）世界主教代表會議首先是一個祈禱和聆聽的活動，不僅關乎會議的成員，也涉及每位領洗的教友和每個特定的教會。事實上，我們此刻都被召喚在祈禱的共融中合一，不斷懇求聖神的引領，以分辨天主今日對祂的教會所要求的。因此，我寫信給各位，你們在各自的教會裡是「有形的統一中心和基礎」（《教會》教義憲章，23），也是受託於你們的天主子民祈禱的首要推動者，好使全體教會為教宗方濟各和世界主教代表會議的所有成員，升起「懇切的祈禱」（宗 12:5）到天主台前。我請你們為世界代表主教會議祈禱，並敦促你們教會裡的每個基督徒團體，特別是修院，同聲且不斷地祈禱。祈禱是每一位主教應有的參與形式之一，也是對普世教會特別關愛的顯著標誌（參閱：《宗徒的繼承人》，13）。

不同形式的祈禱是教會同道偕行生活的多面向表現。首要而言，祈禱是聆聽。教宗在開啟這段同道偕行之旅時曾提到：「世界主教代表會議給我們機會成為聆聽的教會，擺脫例行公事、暫停牧靈工作，讓我們停下來聆聽。」（世界主教代表會議反思日，羅馬，2021年10月9日）祈禱的第一步就是聆聽天主聖言，傾聽聖神的聲音。因此，每位教友對世界代表主教會議的首要貢獻，就是聆聽天主聖言和聖神的聲音，堅信聖神的聲音是教會分辨的不可或缺條件。

祈禱的第二種形式，或者說面向，是朝拜聖體。教宗曾說：「如今，我們多麼懷念朝拜聖體的祈禱。很多人不僅失去了朝拜聖體的習慣，也失去了朝拜天主最基本的概念！」（世界主教代表會議反思日，羅馬，2021年10月9日）因此，傾聽之後，我們必須保持敬畏的沈默，敬畏天主對祂的教會所說的話，以及聖神今天在教會中所激發的一切。迄今為止，我們所走過的同道偕行之路使我們感到驚奇和敬畏，從放棄的憂愁（參閱：路 24:17）轉向喜悅的使命，如同那些已認出復活主的人們一樣（參閱：路 24:33）。

祈禱的第三種面向是轉求代禱。我們必須相信代禱的功效，這並不是讓上主屈服於我們的意願，而是請求上主以賜予生命的聖神之力光照我們的心靈，使我們能夠分辨並奉行祂的旨意。「轉求」也意味著承擔責任，向天主宣告我們的參與。「轉求」意味著「我關心，我參與，這是我的事。」為世界主教代表會議、為所有的會議成員、最重要的是為那位經常請我們為他祈禱的教宗代禱，便是最高形式的參與。

最後，親愛的弟兄們，祈禱是謝恩，是認知到天主的行動和恩寵在我們的一切工作和團體生活中的無上地位。教宗曾說：「恩寵先於謝恩的祈禱，我們在學會思考前就已被念及到；我們在學會愛之前就已經蒙受了愛；我們在心中萌生渴望之前就已經被渴望。」（教宗方濟各，公開教理講授，2020年12月30日）謝恩祈禱是一

種真正的「療法」，使我們從封閉自己轉向開放，從而能夠發現天主在祂的教會持續的一切工作。

親愛的兄弟們，透過聆聽、朝拜聖體、轉求、和謝恩的祈禱，整個教會將藉著聖神的力量參與世界主教代表會議，這是一個關乎所有教友的活動。我呼籲你們持續強調為世界主教代表會議祈禱，特別在10月1日，常年期第二十六主日（甲年），在講道、信友禱詞、和最後的降福禮中提及。為此，我附上一些可用的信友禱詞和降福禮經文，以供參考。

誠摯感謝你們帶領各教會踏上同道偕行之旅所付出的努力，感謝天主所賜的共融之禮，讓充滿喜悅希望在我們的教會旅程中滋長繁盛。請放心，我代表整個教會為你們和你們的牧靈工作祈禱。願天主的聖神照亮我們，時刻引領我們走在祂旨意的道路上，因為只有祂的聖言能賜給我們生氣（詠 119:50），並在其中找到喜樂的泉源。

世界主教會議代表祕書長

格雷奇（Mario Grech） 樞機

（天主教會臺灣地區主教團祕書處 譯）

甲年常年期第二十六主日

彌撒結束時隆重降福禮

以下祝福禮可由司鐸自行決定使用。

司鐸可採用以下訓詞勸勉。

弟兄姐妹們，耶穌應許每當門徒因祂的名聚集時，祂就在他們中間。未來幾天，教宗方濟各將在羅馬主持第十六屆世界主教會議第一場會議的開幕禮。讓我們舉心轉向天主，祈求上主的降福，加強我們在祂聖神內的共融，引導我們明白全部真理，並不斷啟發世界主教會議的參與者。

然後，遣散會眾。主祭面向信友，伸手祝福說：

願主與你們同在！

會眾回答：

也與你的心靈同在。

然後由執事，若無執事時，司鐸自己以下列的話邀請信友：

請大家俯首，接受降福。

接著，主祭向會眾伸雙手，念降福經文，眾答：「阿們」。

我們的天主父，曾多次並以多種方式
藉著先知對我們的祖先說過話；
願祂時時引導你們和整個教會忠於祂的聖言
並能知曉祂的旨意。

答：阿們。

聖子在時辰已滿的時刻被派遣
向所有人顯示天父豐富的慈悲，
願你們與祂以及與你們的弟兄姐妹保持共融。

答：阿們。

聖神帶領你們所有人，尤其是世界主教會議，
認清時代的記號，
使凡事都能翕合天主的旨意；
願你們的教會生活及福音傳播都能結出豐碩的合一果實。

答：阿們。

願全能的天主，聖父、聖子✠、聖神，
降福你們，並常與你們同在。

答：阿們。

(天主教台灣地區主教團禮儀委員會 恭譯)

平日彌撒

信友禱詞

這些代禱禱詞可作為平日彌撒的信友禱詞，或晚禱的禱詞之用。

造物主及教會之主，聖神，引導教會經歷時光歲月，並溫柔地推動教會不斷前進；讓我們向祂懇求：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，教會的靈魂，請降臨：求祢使世界主教會議的每一位參與者合一共融，並使每個人的努力、盼望和渴望都能結出豐碩的果實；我們呼求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，天主溫柔的氣息，請降臨；祢在耶穌內使熄滅的火焰復燃，使壓傷的蘆葦恢復活力，我們祈求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

造物主聖神，請降臨；祢使枯骨復生，將迷途分散的人們聚集，讓彼此不認識的人們展開對話交談，我們請求你：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，天主燃燒的火焰，請降臨；祢淨化所有徒然無益的心思念慮，將一切悲傷焚毀並轉化為新生的喜悅，我們懇求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，卑微者和貧窮者的美麗，請降臨；祢藉那些熱愛和平與渴望正義之人的眼淚，建立了基督羔羊美麗的新娘——教會，我們呼求祢：聖神，天主的寬恕，請降臨，並為了建立新的友誼關係，請將我們轉化成祢和好的氣息，我們祈求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，無與倫比的智慧，請降臨，並將祢同道偕行的恩賜充滿我們，我們懇求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

聖神，教會永恆的希望，請降臨，並按天主的心激發我們的夢想和渴望，讓世人眼中看似不可能的事成為可能的，我們懇求祢：

答：聖神，求祢降臨，使萬物煥然一新。

（天主教台灣地區主教團禮儀委員會 恭譯）

慶日甲年常年期第二十五及第二十六主日

信友禱詞

為世界主教會議開幕前的甲年常年期第二十五和第二十六主日，我們為信友禱詞提出了幾個祈禱意向：

主祭邀請詞

（宗座禮儀聖事部只提供了祈禱意向，主祭邀請詞及主祭結束禱詞是天主教台灣地區主教團禮儀委員會為方便主祭使用，按這兩個主日的福音信息所編寫而成的，主祭可以自由採用。）

第廿五主日

親愛的弟兄姐妹們：天主的慷慨總是讓我們無法理解，時常令我們驚奇。現在就讓我們懷著對天主救恩的盼望，信賴祂的寬宏大度，謙恭地為世界主教會議向天主祈禱。

第廿六主日

親愛的弟兄姐妹們：為那些實行天主旨意的人，他們將在祈禱中領受天主的應許。現在就讓我們為世界主教會議祈禱，祈求天主賜予恩寵，使我們能尋求祂的旨意，並愛慕祂的誠命。

祈禱意象

請為教會祈禱：在進入同道偕行旅途新階段的前夕，求主使福音能在教會身上活躍並發揮作用，讓她像比喻中的葡萄園一樣，成為所有尋求生命意義的人們所能找到的一處希望場所、一句希望話語，以及一縷希望氣息的重要地方，我們同聲祈禱：

答：求主俯聽我們。

請為主教們和所有世界主教會議的參與者祈禱：求主使他們藉著聆聽聖神湧現提議，使全體天主子民在共融的動力中，感受到真正在參與教會生活，並在世界上成為新穎福音生動且具吸引力的見證人，我們同聲祈禱：

答：求主俯聽我們。

請為神學家們祈禱：求主使智慧和啟示的恩賜伴隨著他們對世界主教會議工作的貢獻，讓信德的恩賜成為所有天主子民的生命，我們同聲祈禱：

答：求主俯聽我們。

請為年輕人祈禱：他們是真理與見證、實在與靈性的追尋者；透過同道偕行的旅途，求主使他們在當今世界的挑戰中，能感受到越來越多參與教會生活和使命的機會，並以他們這個世代的熱情，給許多人帶來那泉湧自與基督相遇的希望。我們同聲祈禱：

答：求主俯聽我們。

請為聚集於此，與普世基督徒團體共融的我們祈禱：在基督的聖體寶血內，上主的美善臨到我們每個人身上，求主使我們藉著品嚐上主的美善，而能從祂那裡接受對近人的全新視野，並成為我們生活世界中慷慨的見證，我們同聲祈禱：

答：求主俯聽我們。

主祭邀請詞結束禱詞

第廿五主日

天主，祢親近所有呼求祢的人；祈求祢憐憫我們、親近我們，並俯聽我們的祈禱。以上所求，是靠我們的主基督。

第廿六主日

天主，祢使我們認識祢的道路，並教導我們祢的途徑；祈求祢不要忘記祢的仁慈，俯聽我們的祈禱，並以祢的真理帶領我們。以上所求，是靠我們的主基督。

(天主教台灣地區主教團禮儀委員會 恭譯)

基督君王節

2023.11.26

請支持主教團事工

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主內的弟兄姊妹平安：

當您收到這基督君王節的募款卡時，在羅馬舉行的第十六屆世界主教代表會議第一會期即將結束，而第二會期將繼續於2024年10月召開。這意味著，共議性的轉變，已開始在各地方教會逐漸落實，而教會轉變的最終結果將會是一個「全體盡使命職責」的教會，即每一個領了洗的人都傳教的教會。

教會面對這史無前例的轉變，主教團除了要舉辦一些傳統性的活動以外，如2024年10月5日在高雄教區舉行的全國聖體大會，主教團也必須要有方法及新的制度，為及早培育一些能推動同道偕行精神的司鐸及平信徒，使同道偕行的精神逐漸落實在每一個教會團體，尤其是堂區和善會組織。這一切都會影響到主教團的財務狀況。

正如世界主教代表會議主題所表達，要體現一個同道偕行的教會，教會全體就必須活出「共融、參與及使命」，而「參與」也包含財務上的需要。為此，除了您支持主教團的財務以外，主教團也希望其他主內的弟兄姊妹因透過您也能參與其中。

主教們——您們的牧者，在此衷心感謝您為主教團的服務事工一向所作的奉獻，也藉此機會問候您及您的家人，祈求耶穌基督——普世及人類的君王，以及祂至聖的母親聖母瑪利亞，豐厚地降福您、保護您的家人，並賜予您閤家平安與喜樂。

您的僕人

主教團主席

李志勳

台北總教區

鍾子任

台中教區

蔡熾文

嘉義教區

浦善皓

台南教區

黃敏正

高雄教區

劉培忠

花蓮教區

黃北明

2023 年基督君王節

主教團秘書處公告

主團祕公字第11202號

得悉傅德立 (*Frédéric Fornos*) 神父——教宗全球祈禱網絡 (祈禱福傳會) 暨聖體生活團 (聖體軍) 國際總輔導, 任命耶穌會會士鄧立仁神父擔任教宗全球祈禱網絡暨聖體生活團台灣總輔導, 2023年8月1日起生效, 主教團謹此向鄧立仁神父表示支持, 並感謝徐森義神父自2014年以來對此使命的貢獻。

主教團秘書長 陳科神父

2023年10月2日



Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of prayer for the Care of Creation

1 September 2023

Dear brothers and sisters!

“Let Justice and Peace Flow” is the theme of this year’s ecumenical Season of Creation, inspired by the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (5:24).

The evocative image used by Amos speaks to us of what God desires. God wants justice to reign; it is as essential to our life as God’s children made in his likeness as water is essential for our physical survival. This justice must flow forth wherever it is needed, neither remaining hidden deep beneath the ground nor vanishing like water that evaporates before it can bring sustenance. God wants everyone to strive to be just in every situation, to live according to his laws and thus to enable life to flourish. When we “seek first the kingdom of God” (Mt 6:33), maintaining a right relationship with God, humanity and nature, then justice and peace can flow like a never-failing stream of pure water, nourishing humanity and all creatures.

On a beautiful summer day in July 2022, during my pilgrimage to Canada, I reflected on this on the shores of Lac Ste. Anne in Alberta. That lake has been a place of pilgrimage for many generations of indigenous people. Surrounded by the beating of drums, I thought: “How many hearts have come here with anxious longing, weighed down by life’s burdens, and found by these waters consolation and strength to carry on! Here, immersed in creation, we can also sense another beating: the maternal heartbeat of the earth. Just as the hearts of babies in the womb beat in harmony with those of their mothers, so in order to grow as people, we need to harmonize our own rhythms of life with those of creation, which gives us life”. [1]

During this Season of Creation, let us dwell on those heartbeats: our own and those of our mothers and grandmothers, the heartbeat of creation and the heartbeat of God. Today they do not beat in harmony; they are not harmonized in justice and peace. Too many of our brothers and sisters are prevented from drinking from that mighty river. Let us heed our call to stand with the victims of environmental and climate injustice, and to put an end to the senseless war against creation.

The effects of this war can be seen in the many rivers that are drying up. Benedict XVI once observed that: “the external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast”. [2] Consumerist greed, fuelled by selfish hearts, is disrupting the planet’s water cycle. The unrestrained burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of forests are pushing temperatures higher and leading to massive droughts. Alarming water shortages increasingly affect both small rural communities and large metropolises. Moreover, predatory industries are depleting and polluting our freshwater sources through extreme practices such as fracking for oil and gas extraction, unchecked mega-mining projects, and intensive animal farming. “Sister Water”, in the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, is pillaged and turned into “a commodity subject to the laws of the market” (*Laudato Si*’, 30).

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that acting now with greater urgency means that we will not miss our chance to create a more sustainable and just world. We can and we must prevent the worst from happening. “Truly, much can be done” (*ibid.*, 180),

provided we come together like so many streams, brooks and rivulets, merging finally in a mighty river to irrigate the life of our marvellous planet and our human family for generations to come. So let us join hands and take bold steps to “Let Justice and Peace Flow” throughout our world.

How can we contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace in this Season of Creation? What can we, particularly as Christian communities, do to heal our common home so that it can once again teem with life? We must do this by resolving to transform our hearts, our lifestyles, and the public policies ruling our societies.

First, let us join the mighty river by transforming our hearts. This is essential for any other transformation to occur; it is that “ecological conversion” which Saint John Paul II encouraged us to embrace: the renewal of our relationship with creation so that we no longer see it as an object to be exploited but cherish it instead as a sacred gift from our Creator. Furthermore, we should realize that an integral approach to respect for the environment involves four relationships: with God, with our brothers and sisters of today and tomorrow, with all of nature, and with ourselves.

As to the first of these relationships, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the urgent need to recognize that creation and redemption are inseparably linked: “The Redeemer is the Creator and if we do not proclaim God in his full grandeur – as Creator and as Redeemer – we also diminish the value of the redemption”. [3] Creation refers both to God’s mysterious, magnificent act of creating this majestic, beautiful planet and universe out of nothing and to the continuing result of that act, which we experience as an inexhaustible gift. During the liturgy and personal prayer in “the great cathedral of creation”, [4] let us recall the great Artist who creates such beauty, and reflect on the mystery of that loving decision to create the cosmos.

Second, let us add to the flow of this mighty river by transforming our lifestyles. Starting from grateful wonder at the Creator and his creation, let us repent of our “ecological sins”, as my brother, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, has urged. These sins harm the world of nature and our fellow men and women. With the help of God’s grace, let us adopt lifestyles marked by less waste and unnecessary consumption, especially where the processes of production are toxic and unsustainable. Let us be as mindful

as we can about our habits and economic decisions so that all can thrive – our fellow men and women wherever they may be, and future generations as well. Let us cooperate in God’s ongoing creation through positive choices: using resources with moderation and a joyful sobriety, disposing and recycling waste, and making greater use of available products and services that are environmentally and socially responsible.

Lastly, for the mighty river to continue flowing, we must transform the public policies that govern our societies and shape the lives of young people today and tomorrow. Economic policies that promote scandalous wealth for a privileged few and degrading conditions for many others, spell the end of peace and justice. It is clear that the richer nations have contracted an “ecological debt” that must be paid (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 51). [5] The world leaders who will gather for the COP28 summit in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December next must listen to science and institute a rapid and equitable transition to end the era of fossil fuel. According to the commitments undertaken in the Paris Agreement to restrain global warming, it is absurd to permit the continued exploration and expansion of fossil fuel infrastructures. Let us raise our voices to halt this injustice towards the poor and towards our children, who will bear the worst effects of climate change. I appeal to all people of good will to act in conformity with these perspectives on society and nature.

Another parallel perspective has to do with the Catholic Church’s commitment to synodality. This year, the closing of the Season of Creation on 4 October, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, will coincide with the opening of the Synod on Synodality. Like rivers in nature, fed by myriad tiny brooks and larger streams and rivulets, the synodal process that began in October 2021 invites all those who take part on a personal or community level, to coalesce in a majestic river of reflection and renewal. The entire People of God is being invited to an immersive journey of synodal dialogue and conversion.

So too, like a river basin with its many tiny and larger tributaries, the Church is a communion of countless local Churches, religious communities and associations that draw from the same shared waters. Each source adds its unique and irreplaceable contribution, until all flow together into the

vast ocean of God’s loving mercy. In the same way that a river is a source of life for its surroundings, our synodal Church must be a source of life for our common home and all its inhabitants. In the same way that a river gives life to all kinds of animal and plant life, a synodal Church must give life by sowing justice and peace in every place it reaches.

In Canada, in July 2022, I spoke of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus brought healing and consolation to many people and proclaimed “a revolution of love”. Lac Ste. Anne, I learned, is also a place of healing, consolation and love, a place that “reminds us that fraternity is genuine if it unites those who are far apart, [and] that the message of unity that heaven sends down to earth does not fear differences, but invites us to fellowship, a communion of differences, in order to start afresh together, because we are all pilgrims on a journey”. [6]

In this Season of Creation, as followers of Christ on our shared synodal journey, let us live, work and pray that our common home will teem with life once again. May the Holy Spirit once more hover over the waters and guide our efforts to “renew the face of the earth” (cf. Ps 104:30).

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 13 May 2023

FRANCIS

[1] Homily at Lac Ste. Anne, Canada, 26 July 2022.

[2] Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry, 24 April 2005.

[3] Conversation at the Cathedral of Bressanone, 6 August 2008.

[4] Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, 21 July 2022.

[5] “A true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time” (*Laudato Si’*, 51).

[6] Homily at Lac Ste. Anne, Canada, 26 July 2022.

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 109th World Day of Migrants & Refugees 2023

(24 September 2023)

Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay

Dear brothers and sisters!

The migratory flows of our times are the expression of a complex and varied phenomenon that, to be properly understood, requires a careful analysis of every aspect of its different stages, from departure to arrival, including the possibility of return. As a contribution to this effort, I have chosen to devote the Message for the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the freedom that should always mark the decision to leave one's native land.

“Free to leave, free to stay” was the title of an initiative of solidarity promoted several years ago by the Italian Episcopal Conference as a concrete response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration movements. From attentive listening to the Particular Churches, I have come to see that ensuring that that freedom is a widely shared pastoral concern.

“An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him’” (Mt 2:13). The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt was not the result of a free decision, nor were many of the migrations that marked the history of the people of Israel. The decision to migrate should always be free, yet in many cases, even in our day, it is not. Conflicts, natural disasters, or more simply the impossibility of living a dignified and prosperous life in one's native land is forcing millions of persons to leave. Already in 2003, Saint John Paul II stated that “as regards migrants and refugees, building conditions of peace means in practice being seriously committed to safeguarding first of all the right not to emigrate, that is, the right to live in peace and dignity

in one's own country” (Message for the 90th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 3).

“They took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him” (Gen 46:6). A grave famine forced Jacob and his entire family to seek refuge in Egypt, where his son Joseph ensured their survival. Persecutions, wars, atmospheric phenomena and dire poverty are among the most visible causes of forced migrations today. Migrants flee because of poverty, fear or desperation. Eliminating these causes and thus putting an end to forced migration calls for shared commitment on the part of all, in accordance with the responsibilities of each. This commitment begins with asking what we can do, but also what we need to stop doing. We need to make every effort to halt the arms race, economic colonialism, the plundering of other people's resources and the devastation of our common home.

“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45). The ideal of the first Christian community seems so distant from today's reality! To make migration a choice that is truly free, efforts must be made to ensure to everyone an equal share in the common good, respect for his or her fundamental rights, and access to an integral human development. Only in this way will we be able to offer to each person the possibility of a dignified and fulfilling life, whether individually or within families. Clearly, the principal responsibility falls to the countries of origin and their leaders, who are called to practice a good politics – one that is transparent, honest, farsighted and at the service of all, especially those most vulnerable. At the same time, they must be empowered to do this, without finding themselves robbed of their natural and human resources and without outside interference aimed at serving the interests of a few. Where circumstances make possible a decision either to migrate or to stay, there is a need to ensure that the decision be well informed and carefully considered, in order to avoid great numbers of men, women and children falling victim to perilous illusions or unscrupulous traffickers.

“In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property” (Lev 25:13). For the people of Israel, the celebration of the jubilee year represented an act of collective justice: “everyone was allowed to return to their original situation, with the cancellation of all debts, restoration of the land, and an opportunity once more to enjoy the freedom proper to the members of the People of God” (Catechesis, 10 February 2016). As we approach the Holy Year of 2025, we do well to remember this aspect of the jubilee celebrations. Joint efforts are needed by individual countries and the international community to ensure that all enjoy the right not to be forced to emigrate, in other words, the chance to live in peace and with dignity in one's own country. This right has yet to be codified, but it is one of fundamental importance, and its protection must be seen as a shared responsibility on the part of all States with respect to a common good that transcends national borders. Indeed, since the world's resources are not unlimited, the development of the economically poorer countries depends on the capacity for sharing that we can manage to generate among all countries. Until this right is guaranteed – and here we are speaking of a long process – many people will still have to emigrate in order to seek a better life.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:35-36). These words are a constant admonition to see in the migrant not simply a brother or sister in difficulty, but Christ himself, who knocks at our door. Consequently, even as we work to ensure that in every case migration is the fruit of a free decision, we are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for a safe and regular migration. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone.

The synodal path that we have undertaken as a Church leads us to see in those who are most vulnerable – among whom are many migrants and refugees – special companions on our way, to be loved and cared for as brothers and sisters. Only by walking together will we be able to go far and reach the common goal of our journey.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 11 May 2023

FRANCIS

PRAYER

*God, Father Almighty,
grant us the grace to work tirelessly
for justice, solidarity and peace,
so that all your children may enjoy
the freedom to choose whether to migrate or to stay.
Grant us the courage to denounce
all the horrors of our world,
and to combat every injustice
that mars the beauty of your children
and the harmony of our common home.
Sustain us by the power of your Spirit,
so that we can reflect your tender love
to every migrant whom you place in our path,
and to spread in hearts and in every situation
the culture of encounter and of care.*

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for World Mission Day 2023

(24 September 2023)

Hearts on fire, feet on the move (cf. Lk 24:13-35)

Dear brothers and sisters!

For this year's World Mission Sunday, I have chosen a theme inspired by the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, in the Gospel of Luke (cf. 24:13-35): "Hearts on fire, feet on the move". Those two disciples were confused and dismayed, but their encounter with Christ in the word and in the breaking of the bread sparked in them the enthusiastic desire to set out again towards Jerusalem and proclaim that the Lord had truly risen. In the Gospel account, we perceive this change in the disciples through a few revealing images: their hearts burned within them as they heard the Scriptures explained by Jesus, their eyes were opened as they recognized him and, ultimately, their feet set out on the way. By meditating on these three images, which reflect the journey of all missionary disciples, we can renew our zeal for evangelization in today's world.

1. Our hearts burned within us "when he explained the Scriptures to us". In missionary activity, the word of God illumines and transforms hearts.

On the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the hearts of the two disciples were downcast, as shown by their dejected faces, because of the death of Jesus, in whom they had believed (cf. v. 17). Faced with the failure of the crucified Master, their hopes that he was the Messiah collapsed (cf. v. 21).

Then, "as they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them" (v. 15). As when he first called the disciples, so now, amid their bewilderment, the Lord takes the initiative; he approaches them and walks alongside them. So too, in his great mercy, he never tires of being with us, despite all our failings, doubts, weaknesses, and the dismay and pessimism that make us become "foolish and slow of heart" (v. 25), men and women of little faith.

Today, as then, the Risen Lord remains close to his missionary disciples and walks beside them, particularly when they feel disoriented, discouraged, fearful of the mystery of iniquity that surrounds them and seeks to overwhelm them. So, "let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!" (Evangelii Gaudium, 86). The Lord is greater than all our problems, above all if we encounter them in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. For in the end, this mission is his and we are nothing more than his humble co-workers, "useless servants" (cf. Lk 17:10).

I desire to express my closeness in Christ to all the men and women missionaries in the world, especially to those enduring any kind of hardship. Dear friends, the Risen Lord is always with you. He sees your generosity and the sacrifices you are making for the mission of evangelization in distant lands. Not every day of our lives is serene and unclouded, but let us never forget the words of the Lord Jesus to his friends before his Passion: "In the world you will have tribulations, but be courageous: I have conquered the world!" (Jn 16:33).

After listening to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Lk 24:27). The hearts of the disciples thrilled, as they later confided to each other: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" (v. 32). Jesus is himself the living Word, who alone can make our hearts burn within us, as he enlightens and transforms them.

In this way, we can better understand Saint Jerome's dictum that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (Commentary on Isaiah, Prologue). "Without the Lord to introduce us, it is impossible to understand sacred Scripture in depth; yet the opposite is equally true: without sacred Scripture, the events of Jesus' mission and of his Church in the world remain indecipherable" (Aperuit Illis, 1). It follows that knowledge of Scripture is important for the Christian life, and even more so for the preaching of Christ and his Gospel. Otherwise, what are you passing on to others if not your own ideas and projects? A cold heart can never make other hearts burn!

So let us always be willing to let ourselves be accompanied by the Risen Lord as he explains to us the meaning of the Scriptures. May he make our hearts burn within us; may he enlighten and transform us, so that we can proclaim his mystery of salvation to the world with the power and wisdom that come from his Spirit.

2. Our eyes were “opened and recognized him” in the breaking of the bread. Jesus in the Eucharist is the source and summit of the mission.

The fact that their hearts burned for the word of God prompted the disciples of Emmaus to ask the mysterious Wayfarer to stay with them as evening drew near. When they gathered around the table, their eyes were opened and they recognized him when he broke the bread. The decisive element that opened the eyes of the disciples was the sequence of actions performed by Jesus: he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Those were the usual gestures of the head of a Jewish household, but, performed by Jesus Christ with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they renewed for his two table companions the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and above all that of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the sacrifice of the cross. Yet at the very moment when they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, “he vanished from their sight” (Lk 24:31). Here we can recognize an essential reality of our faith: Christ, who breaks the bread, now becomes the bread broken, shared with the disciples and consumed by them. He is seen no longer, for now he has entered the hearts of the disciples, to make them burn all the more, and this prompts them to set out immediately to share with everyone their unique experience of meeting the Risen Lord. The risen Christ, then, is both the one who breaks the bread and, at the same time, the bread itself, broken for us. It follows that every missionary disciple is called to become, like Jesus and in him, through the working of the Holy Spirit, one who breaks the bread and one who is broken bread for the world.

Here it should be remembered that breaking our material bread with the hungry in the name of Christ is already a work of Christian mission. How much more so is the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, which is Christ himself, a work of mission par excellence, since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church.

As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out: “We cannot keep to ourselves the love

we celebrate in the Sacrament [of the Eucharist]. By its very nature, it asks to be communicated to everyone. What the world needs is the love of God, to encounter Christ and believe in him. For this reason the Eucharist is not only the source and summit of the life of the Church; it is also the source and summit of her mission: ‘An authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church’” (Sacramentum Caritatis, 84).

In order to bear fruit we must remain united to Jesus (cf. Jn 15:4-9). This union is achieved through daily prayer, particularly in Eucharistic adoration, as we remain in silence in the presence of the Lord, who remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. By lovingly cultivating this communion with Christ, the missionary disciple can become a mystic in action. May our hearts always yearn for the company of Jesus, echoing the ardent plea of the two disciples of Emmaus, especially in the evening hours: “Stay with us, Lord!” (cf. Lk 24:29).

3. Our feet set out on the way, with the joy of telling others about the Risen Christ. The eternal youth of a Church that is always going forth.

After their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus “in the breaking of the bread”, the disciples “set out without delay and returned to Jerusalem” (cf. Lk 24:33). This setting out in haste, to share with others the joy of meeting the Lord, demonstrates that “the joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who meet Jesus. Those who allow themselves to be saved by him are freed from sin, from sadness, from inner emptiness, from isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn” (Evangelii Gaudium, 1). One cannot truly encounter the risen Jesus without being set on fire with enthusiasm to tell everyone about him. Therefore, the primary and principal resource of the mission are those persons who have come to know the risen Christ in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist, who carry his fire in their heart and his light in their gaze. They can bear witness to the life that never dies, even in the most difficult of situations and in the darkest of moments.

The image of “feet setting out” reminds us once more of the perennial validity of the *missio ad gentes*, the mission entrusted to the Church by the risen Lord to evangelize all individuals and peoples, even to the ends of the earth. Today more than ever, our human family, wounded by so many

situations of injustice, so many divisions and wars, is in need of the Good News of peace and salvation in Christ. I take this opportunity to reiterate that “everyone has the right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to announce it without excluding anyone, not as one who imposes a new obligation, but as one who shares a joy, signals a beautiful horizon, offers a desirable banquet” (Evangelii Gaudium, 14). Missionary conversion remains the principal goal that we must set for ourselves as individuals and as a community, because “missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity” (ibid., 15).

As the Apostle Paul confirms, the love of Christ captivates and impels us (cf. 2 Cor 5:14). This love is two-fold: the love of Christ for us, which calls forth, inspires and arouses our love for him. A love that makes the Church, in constantly setting out anew, ever young. For all her members are entrusted with the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, in the conviction that “he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again” (v. 15). All of us can contribute to this missionary movement: with our prayers and activities, with material offerings and the offering of our sufferings, and with our personal witness. The Pontifical Mission Societies are the privileged means of fostering this missionary cooperation on both the spiritual and material levels. For this reason, the collection taken on World Mission Sunday is devoted to the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The urgency of the Church’s missionary activity naturally calls for an ever closer missionary cooperation on the part of all her members and at every level. This is an essential goal of the synodal journey that the Church has undertaken, guided by the key words: communion, participation, mission. This journey is certainly not a turning of the Church in upon herself; nor is it a referendum about what we ought to believe and practice, nor a matter of human preferences. Rather, it is a process of setting out on the way and, like the disciples of Emmaus, listening to the risen Lord. For he always comes among us to explain the meaning of the Scriptures and to break bread for us, so that we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, carry out his mission in the world.

Just as the two disciples of Emmaus told the others what had taken place along the way (cf. Lk 24:35), so too our proclamation will be a joyful telling of Christ the Lord, his life, his passion, his death and resurrection, and the wonders that his love has accomplished in our lives.

So let us set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit. Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion. Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity.

Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ’s missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 6 January 2023, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

FRANCIS



16th GENERAL ORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Elements of Languages - Messages

On the Instrumentum laboris

- Although it is not a summary document, the IL was drafted **on the basis of all the material gathered during the phase of listening to the People of God** - which began in October 2021 -, and in particular the Final Documents of the Continental Assemblies. Therefore, with its publication, the first phase of the Synod 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission' closes, and the second - the celebratory one - of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops divided into two sessions (October 2023 and 2024) opens.
- The **IL can be considered a point of arrival that closes the first phase of the synod**. However, the closing of the first phase **does not mean the conclusion of the process of listening and discernment** of the people of God.
- The **IL is not a manual of ecclesiology**. What was written for the Working Document for the Continental Stage applies also here: "it is not a document of the Magisterium of the Church, nor the report of a sociological survey; it does not offer the formulation of operational indications, of goals and objectives, nor the complete elaboration of a theological vision". Rather, the IL is the fruit of an experience: the experience of sincere and cordial encounters between brothers and sisters in the faith that has been a source of joy. On the other hand, as Pope Francis recalled, "The theme of synodality is not a chapter in a treatise on ecclesiology, much less a fashion, a slogan or the new term to be used or instrumentalised in our meetings. No! Synodality expresses the nature of the Church, its form, its style, its mission" (*Address to the faithful of the diocese of Rome*, 18 September 2021).

- **The IL does not suggest answers, nor can it be understood as a first draft of the final document of the October Assembly to be corrected or amended.** In fact, the purpose of the synodal process "is not to produce documents, but to open horizons of hope for the fulfilment of the Church's mission" (DCS, n. 6).
- **The IL is a tool for discernment.** It is conceived as a practical tool at the service of the conduct of the Synodal Assembly of October 2023 and the preparation of the participants in the assembly, thus for its preparation. For this reason, it articulates some of the priorities that emerged from listening to the People of God in a series of questions for the reflection and discernment of the Assembly, with the aim of identifying some concrete steps to be taken to deepen the learning of the synodal method and style in the Church in our time.
- **The reference point of the IL is the local Church, as the theological place where the baptised concretely experience walking together.** The questions that the IL poses are an expression of the richness of the local realities and situations of life from which they were drawn up: they are loaded with the names and concrete faces of those who took part, they bear witness to the experience of faith of the People of God and thus bear the imprint of a transcendent meaning.

What the Instrumentum laboris testifies to

- **An experience of living Church:** the experience of sincere and cordial encounters between brothers and sisters in the faith that has been a source of joy; it has made us touch with our own hands the catholicity of the Church, which, in the variety of ages, genders and social conditions manifests an extraordinary wealth of charisms and ecclesial vocations and preserves a treasure trove of differences in languages, cultures, liturgical expressions and theological traditions.
- **The acquired awareness** that becoming an increasingly synodal Church represents our identity and our vocation: walking together, that is, making synod, is the way to truly be disciples and friends of that Master and Lord who said of himself "I am the way" (Jn 14:6). Today it also constitutes a deep desire: "having experienced it as a grace, we want to continue to do so."

- **One cannot understand a synodal Church if not within the horizon of communion, which is always also a mission** to proclaim and incarnate the Gospel in every dimension of human existence. Communion and mission are nourished first of all in the common participation in the Eucharist, but also through institutions, structures and procedures as spaces in which the common baptismal dignity and co-responsibility in the mission are not only affirmed but also exercised and practised.
- **The importance of being an open and restless Church in our time.** Pope Francis reminded us: If a Christian does not feel this *inner restlessness*, if he does not live it, something is missing; and this *inner restlessness* arises from one's faith and invites us to consider what is best to do, what should be kept or changed. History teaches us that standing still cannot be a good condition for the Church (cf. *Evangelii gaudium*, 23). And movement is a consequence of docility to the Holy Spirit, who is the director of this story in which everyone is a restless protagonist, never standing still. (*Address to the faithful of the diocese of Rome*, 18 September 2021)
- **The importance of the ecumenical journey:** it is a call for a creative and renewed ecumenism and to stimulate ecumenical dialogue. As Pope Francis recalled in his address to His Holiness Mar Awa III Catholic-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, "The path of synodality, which the Catholic Church is walking, is and must be ecumenical, just as the ecumenical path is synodal."
- **The peculiarities of the situations the Church experiences in the different regions of the world:** from the too many wars that stain our planet with blood and call for a renewed commitment to building a just peace, to the threat represented by climate change with the consequent priority of caring for the common home; from an economic system that produces exploitation, inequality and 'waste' to the homologating pressure of cultural colonialism that crushes minorities; from the experience of suffering persecution to the point of martyrdom to an emigration that progressively empties communities, threatening their very survival; from the growing cultural pluralism that now marks the entire planet, to the experience of Christian communities that repre-

sent scattered minorities within the country in which they live, to the experience of coming to terms with an ever more driven, and at times aggressive, secularisation that seems to consider religious experience irrelevant, but does not stop thirsting for the Good News of the Gospel. In many regions the Churches are deeply affected by the crisis of abuses: sexual, power and conscience, economic and institutional. These are open wounds, the consequences of which have not yet been fully addressed. In addition to asking the victims of the suffering it has caused for forgiveness, the Church must join the growing commitment to conversion and reform in order to prevent similar situations from happening again in the future.

- The importance of the synodal methodology for a synodal style and dynamism, centred on listening also through conversation in the Spirit. And the training in this method, particularly of facilitators capable of accompanying communities to practise and live the dynamic tension of synodality with creativity.
- The ability to face and manage tensions in order to embrace diversity as a way to unity
- The integration of plurality in the Church, also of charisms and ministries, beyond uniformity, fragmentation and polarisation: "synodal dynamism is a way to relate them and enhance them without crushing them in uniformity".
- A Church capable of embracing vulnerability and incompleteness.
- The importance of looking beyond the present, to the eschatological dimension
- The need for a liturgical renewal that is compatible with the aspirations of young people and preserves both its essence and its symbols. This need stems from the awareness that the liturgy is at the centre of the Church's life with, first and foremost, the Eucharist as the "source and summit" of Christian life.
- The need to manage the tension between truth and mercy, between wanting to be inclusive while being authentic and faithful to the teachings of the Church.

On the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

- Its objective will be to relaunch the process and to incarnate it in the ordinary life of the Church, identifying on which lines the Spirit invites us to walk more decisively. It is the dynamism of the Church's walk together, in fidelity to the mission that the Lord has entrusted to it, that is the fruit we ask for the next Assembly. Indeed, the purpose of the synodal process "is not to produce documents, but to open horizons of hope for the fulfilment of the Church's mission" (DCS, no. 6).
- The Synodal Assembly of October 2023 will also be asked to listen deeply to the situations in which the Church lives and carries out its mission.

On synodality in brief

- Synodality is a learning process
- Synodality begins with taking into account our "situationality": the starting points are different for each of us
- Synodality is a gradual process: it is a step-by-step conversion
- Synodality is learning by doing
- Synodality is a creative and open path
- Synodality is a spiritual experience that puts the Holy Spirit at the centre
- Synodality is the art of valuing, welcoming and knowing how to articulate all the gifts and charisms that the Lord has made available to his Church.
- This synod is a process of empowerment of the baptised
- This synod is a process of recognising the other/other through listening
- This synod is a way of advancing the reception of the Second Vatican Council

Letter from the Cardinal Mario Grech to the Bishops of the World

Vatican, 12 September 2023

Prot, No. 230382

Dear brothers in the episcopate,

"The People of God have been on the move since Pope Francis convened the whole Church in Synod in October 2021" (*Instrumentum laboris*, 1), and now we have reached another milestone in this process that began with the consultation of the People of God. In a few days, on October 4, the Holy Father will open the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, "For a Synodal Church. Communion, Participation, Mission."

"Without prayer there will be no Synod" (Pope Francis, Prayer Intention for the month of October 2022). The Synod is, above all, an event of prayer and listening that involves not only the members of the Synodal Assembly, but every baptized person and every particular Church. Indeed, all of us are called at this time to unite in communion of prayer and insistent invocation of the Holy Spirit to guide us in discerning what the Lord is asking of his Church today. Therefore, I write to you, who are "the visible principle and foundation of unity" (LG 23) in your particular Churches and the first animators of prayer for the portion of God's people entrusted to you so that, from the whole Church "an unceasing prayer" (Acts 12:5) may ascend to God for the Holy Father, Pope Francis and for all the members of the Synodal Assembly. I ask you, therefore, to pray for the Synod and to urge unanimous and unceasing prayer from every Christian community in your Particular Church, especially the monastic communities. Prayer is one of the forms of participation proper to every bishop in collegial action and an eminent sign of solicitude for the universal Church (cf. *Apostolorum successores*, 13).

The different forms of prayer are but the multi-dimensional expressions of the Church's synodal life. First and foremost, **prayer is listening**. In opening the synodal journey, the Holy Father said, "The Synod then offers

us the opportunity to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine and pause from our pastoral concerns in order to stop and listen.” (*Moment of Reflection*, Rome, Oct. 9, 2021). The first step in prayer is listening to the Word of God, listening to the Spirit. Therefore, the first contribution of every baptized person to the unfolding of the Synod Assembly will be listening to the Word of God and the Spirit in the conviction that the voice of the Spirit is the sine qua non for ecclesial discernment.

The second form, or face, of **prayer is adoration**. The Holy Father said, “Today how much we miss the prayer of adoration; so many people have lost not only the habit but also the very notion of what it means to worship God!” (Rome, Oct. 9, 2021). Listening, then, must be followed by adoring silence in awe for what God is saying to his Church and for what the Spirit arouses in in the Church today. The synodal path traversed so far leads us to wonder and awe, to the conversion of our gaze from the sadness of resignation (cf. Lk 24:17) to the joyful mission of those who have discovered the presence of the Risen One in their midst (cf. Lk 24:33).

The third face of **prayer is intercession**. We must believe in the efficacy of intercessory prayer, which is not about bending God’s will to ours. Rather, intercession is about asking the Lord to enlighten our hearts with the power of his life-giving Spirit so that we might discern and do his will. “To intercede” also means to assume responsibility, to declare before God our participation and our involvement. “To intercede” means to say, “I’m interested, I’m in, it belongs to me.” To intercede for the Synod Assembly, for all its members and, first and foremost, for the Holy Father who so often asks us to pray for him, is to engage the highest form of participation.

Finally, dear brothers, **prayer is thanksgiving**, recognizing the primacy of God’s action and grace in all our works and in the life of the Christian community. The Holy Father said, “The prayer of thanksgiving always begins from here: from the recognition that grace precedes us. We were thought of before we learned how to think; we were loved before we learned how to love; we were desired before our hearts conceived a desire.” (*General Audience*, Dec. 30, 2020). The prayer of thanksgiving is a true “therapy” that moves us from our withdrawal into ourselves to the openness that is able to discover all that God continues to work in his Church.

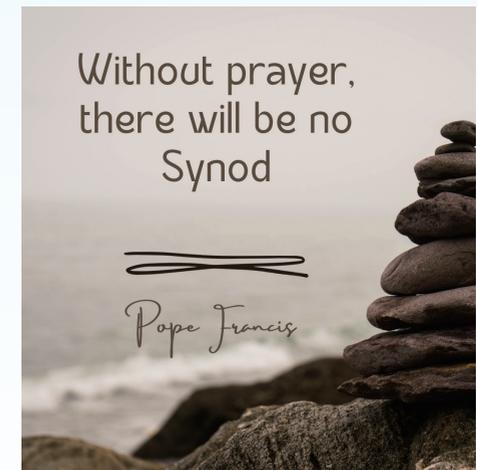
Dear Brothers, with the prayer of listening, adoration, intercession and thanksgiving, the whole ecclesial community will be present, in the power of the Spirit, at the Synodal Assembly as an event that concerns all the baptized. I invite you to emphasize prayer for the Synodal Assembly especially on October 1, XXVI Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year A), remembering it in the homily, the Universal Prayers, and in the final blessing of the Eucharistic celebration. For this purpose, I attach some texts that can be used for the Universal Prayers and the final blessing.

With gratitude to you for your solicitude in guiding your particular Churches on the synodal journey, and to the Lord for the gifts of communion and joyful hope that he makes flourish on our ecclesial journey, be assured of my prayers for you and for your ministry on behalf of the whole Church. May the Spirit of the Lord enlighten us and lead us always in the way of his will, for it is only his Word that makes us live (cf. Ps. 119:50) and in which we find our joy.

Fraternally,

Mario Card. GRECH

General Secretary



XXVI SUNDAY, ORDINARY TIME
BLESSING AT THE END OF
THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

The following blessing may be used at the discretion of the priest.

The same priest speaks the exhortation.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus promised to be present in the midst of his disciples whenever they gather in his name. In the coming days in Rome, Pope Francis will open the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Invoking the Lord's blessing, let us lift our minds to God, that in his Holy Spirit he may strengthen us in communion, guide us to the whole truth and continually enlighten the Participants in the Synodal Assembly.

Then follows the dismissal. The priest, extending his arms and facing the people, says:

The Lord be with you!

The people respond:

And with your spirit.

Then the deacon or, in his absence, the priest himself, invites the faithful with these words: Bow down for the blessing. Then, the priest, holding his hands outstretched over the people, pronounces the blessing, to which all respond: Amen.

May God our Father, who many times and in various ways spoke to our fathers through the prophets, always guide you and the whole Church in fidelity to His Word and in the discernment of His will.

R. Amen.

May the Son, sent in the fullness of time to manifest to all men and women the riches of the Father's mercy, keep you in communion with Him and with your brothers and sisters.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit lead all of you, and in particular the Synod Assembly, to recognise the signs of the times so that, adhering in everything to the will of God, you bear abundant fruit of unity for the life of the Church and for the proclamation of the Gospel.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, The Father, and the Son † and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you forever.

R. Amen.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER - INTERCESSIONS FOR A WEEKDAY

These proposed intercessory prayers can be used on a weekday either as a Universal Prayer during the Eucharistic Celebration or as intercessions at Vespers.

To the Holy Spirit, Creator and Lord of the Church who guides her through time and gently urges her ever onward, we address this supplication:

R. Come, You who ever makes all things new!

Come, Holy Spirit, soul of the Church: gather into unity and make fruitful the toil, the hope, and the desire of each one involved in the Synod Assembly, we invoke you:

Come, gentle Breath of God, who in Jesus revives the dwindling flame, and restore vigor to the bruised reed, we call upon you:

Come, Creator Spirit, who restores parched bones, gathers the lost, and brings into dialogue languages that do not recognize each other, we beseech you:

Come, burning fire of God, who purifies every vain thought, burning and transforming every sadness into the joy of new birth, we implore you:

Come, Beauty of the lowly and the poor, build up the beautiful bride of the Lamb through the tears of those who love peace and hunger for justice, we invoke you:

Come, God's Forgiveness, and convert us to your breath that reconciles us for a new fellowship, we call upon you:

Come, unapproachable Wisdom, and fill us with your synodal gifts, we beseech you:

Come, unfailing Hope of the Church, and stir up dreams and desires according to the heart of God which, to the human eye, seems impossible, we implore you:

May God our Father, who many times and in various ways spoke to our fathers through the prophets, always guide you and the whole Church in fidelity to His Word and in the discernment of His will.

R. Amen.

May the Son, sent in the fullness of time to manifest to all men and women the riches of the Father's mercy, keep you in communion with Him and with your brothers and sisters.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit lead all of you, and in particular the Synod Assembly, to recognise the signs of the times so that, adhering in everything to the will of God, you bear abundant fruit of unity for the life of the Church and for the proclamation of the Gospel.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, The Father, and the Son † and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you forever.

R. Amen.

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