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世界主教代表會議通函

梵蒂岡，2021年5月20日

Prot.N.210114

親愛的主教弟兄：

我以個人名義寫的這封信，是要寄給您下一屆世界主教代表會議「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」的日程，請參閱附件。聖父要我向所有教區主教分享他誠摯的渴望，一起走這條道路，好使我們藉著這共議性的實際體驗得以一起成長。聖父敦促我「向來自地方教會的所有事物保持開放」。

基於這同道偕行之旅對於普世教會與地方教會的益處都有其重要性，若是可能，我個人會前往向每一位主教介紹。我會樂意這麼做，並不只是因為它的內涵需要足夠精細地傳達，也因為從這次教會的探索旅程的開始，我就期望能接近您們，與您們以及託付於您們的天主子民，在這趟旅途中同行，鼓勵並支持

您們。因為我們全部都是「互相連接」，在一同聆聽聖神的過程中，每個人的貢獻都很珍貴。

因此，為了強調這個共議性之旅是分享之旅，2021年10月9~10日，聖父會在梵蒂岡慶祝世界主教代表會議的開幕。隔週主日，2021年10月17日，您們則會在自己的教區慶祝世界主教代表會議的開幕。

我想強調教區諮詢這個階段的重要性，它會以世界主教代表會議的會前會作為結束。在這個階段，我們會特別留心「聆聽」全體天主子民，無一例外，特別關注那些偏遠的、在諮詢時遇到更大困難的人。我們記得在聖本篤會規中，他寫道：「會院中（教區裡）每當有任何重要事物需要處理，院長便應該召集所有會士，向他們陳述將行之事。……我們所以主張必須召集所有的人來開會，是因為上主往往把那最好的，啟示給那些最年輕的人。」（第三章）

因此，每個主教應為共議諮詢工作指派一個教區聯絡人（團隊），做聯繫及提供參照的準則。

我寫這封信的時候，有意識到疫情所造成的許多困難，以及飽受戰火與暴力之苦的國家。我希望在共融的意義更新之下，即便地方教會面對著巨大的挑戰，這個同道偕行的過程仍然能夠幫助到他們。我也看到了許多國家與教區已經開始踏上了地方同道偕行的旅程。賴天主的恩寵，我們將會在準備接下來的世界主教代表會議時，找到創新的方式去體現教區的活力、陳述議程與優先順序。我肯定，我們對耶穌與祂的教會共同的愛，能幫助我們一同走上這條道路。

於此同時，我們感謝已曾經有過共議性經驗的主教弟兄們，也感謝他們願意跟我們分享他們是如何看到了聖神在天主子民中

的工作——這些尚未公開的見證。他們可能也希望與我們分享自己是在何時、是如何曾被聖神的化工所驚豔的。

我跟總祕書處的同仁們目前也在準備各種訓練、資訊協助，以及初步文件。此外，在2021年10月之前的這個預備階段，我們希望能聯絡每個主教團，直接地進行對話。無論如何，若有需求，任何主教都可以聯絡我們。（synodus@synod.va;
m.grech@synod.va）

與此次世界主教代表會議日程一同附上的，是教宗方濟各在2015年10月17日，世界主教代表會議成立五十周年紀念的致辭複本。聖父明確地要我讓你們留意這份文件對我們同道偕行之旅的根本重要性。

即將到來的2021年5月21日正午（羅馬時間），聖座新聞室會在公布欄釋出這封信的附加文件。（…）

誠摯地為您們將著手進行的工作致上感謝，並請為這次的同道偕行之旅持續祈禱。

格雷奇樞機
總祕書處

附上：

1. 世界主教代表會議日程。
2. 世界主教代表會議的資訊圖表。
3. 教宗方濟各在2015年10月17日，世界主教代表會議成立五十周年紀念的致詞。



聖座

世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念

教宗方濟各致詞

保祿六世大禮堂

2015年10月17日星期六

各位主教，

各位弟兄姊妹：

世界主教代表會議成立五十週年誌慶，適逢這會議的大會緊鑼密鼓地進行之際，對我們眾人來說，這實是個令人鼓舞和稱謝上主的理由。自梵二至今屆大會以來，我們越來越體會到「同道偕行」的必要和美好。

在這合宜的機會上，我誠心祝賀祕書長老楞佐·巴迪塞利（Lorenzo Baldisseri）樞機、助理祕書法比奧·法貝內（Fabio Fabene）總主教及世界主教代表會議祕書處的各級人員、顧問及其他合作者，他們都是幕後功臣，而且每晚工作至深夜。我也向各位出席這次大會的教長們，以及其他出席者和各在場人士致候和表達謝意。

此刻，我們也願意記得過去五十年間曾為世界主教代表會議效勞的人，由歷任祕書長開始：瓦迪斯瓦夫·魯賓（Władysław Rubin）樞機，若瑟·唐高（Jozef Tomko）樞機，揚·伯多祿·肖特（Jan Pieter Schotte）樞機和尼各老·埃特羅維奇（Nikola Eterović）樞機。我願趁此機會，誠心感謝所有慷慨和勝任地貢獻己力，為世界主教代表會議工作的人，包括健在和已逝的在內。

自開始就任羅馬主教之職以來，我致力提升世界主教代表會議這梵二最珍貴的遺產。¹ 真福保祿六世認為，世界主教代表會議要重塑出大公會議的形像，且要反映出它的精神和行事方式。² 教宗保祿預見，世界主教代表會議的機制可作「與時俱進的改良。」³ 二十年後，聖若望保祿二世重申這思想說：「這機制可再進一步改良。集體共負牧職或許可在世界主教代表會議中更全面表達出來。」⁴ 2006年，本篤十六世批准在《世界主教代表會議程序》上作的一些修訂，尤其是按《天主教法典》及當時頒布

1 參閱：教宗方濟各，致函世界主教代表會議祕書長巴爾迪塞里樞機，同時提升法比奧·法貝內（Fabio Fabene）蒙席為世界主教代表會議副祕書長，2014年4月1日。

2 參閱：真福保祿六世，世界主教代表會議第一屆常務會議開幕致詞，1967年9月30日。

3 真福保祿六世，宗座牧函《宗座關懷》（*Apostolica Sollicitudo*）手諭（1965年9月15日），緒言。

4 聖若望保祿二世，世界主教代表會議第六屆常務會議閉幕致詞，1983年10月29日。

的《東方教會法典》的規定而作出的。⁵

我們應延續沿途。我們所生活和奉召去愛及服務的世界，即使與我們有著不同的看法，也要求教會在她使命的各範疇內加強合作。天主期望第三個千年的教會應作的，正是走這條「同道偕行」的途徑。

上主要求我們做的，在某意義上已見於「會議」（synod）一詞內。「共議」的觀念——包括平信徒、牧者、羅馬主教在內——容易表達於言詞，卻難於實踐。（譯者註：外語直譯希臘文「syn-hodos」有「同道」之義，中文通常把「synod」一詞譯作「會議」。）

梵二在申明天主子民包括一切已受洗者和奉召「為精神的聖殿及神聖的司祭」的人後，⁶更指出「全體信友由聖神領受了傅油（參閱：若壹二20、27），在信仰上不能錯誤。幾時『從主教們直到最後一位信友』，對信仰及道德問題，表示其普遍的同意，就等於靠著全體教民的信德的超性意識（*sensus fidei*），而流露這特質。」⁷這就是著名的「『在信仰上』不能錯誤」（*infallible "in credendo"*）的意思。

我在《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭中曾強調指出：「天主子民藉著此傅油而成為聖的，因此天主子民在持

5 參閱：《宗座公報》98（2006），755~779。

6 梵二，《教會憲章》（1964年11月21日），10。

7 同上，12。

守信仰上 (*in credendo*) 不會出錯」,⁸ 並且又說：「所有受洗者，無論他們在教會內有何職位、有何信仰培育水準，都是福傳的執行者。一個福傳計畫只由受過專業訓練的人去執行，而其餘信徒只作被動地順從，這樣則不足以面對福傳。」⁹ 這「信德意識」 (*sensus fidei*) 防止一個「訓導的教會」 (*Ecclesia docens*) 與一個「受教的教會」 (*Ecclesia discens*) 兩者間的嚴格區分。¹⁰ 基於這信念，在有關家庭的世界主教代表會議的兩個籌備階段中，我想要徵詢天主子民，而且在每個「會議大綱」 (*Lineamenta*) 階段中都要經常這樣做。這類徵詢總肯定不足以察覺到 (天主子民對這事的) 「信德意識」 (*sensus fidei*)，可是若不予以家庭參與的機會，藉此了解他們的喜樂與期望，以及他們的痛苦與焦慮，我們又怎能談及家庭呢？¹¹ 透過個別教會對所收回的兩份問卷的回覆——他們就那些問卷有很多話要告訴我們——我們至少有機會聆聽到一些家庭談及自己的切身問題。

一個共議性的教會，是一個會聆聽的教會，而且知

8 教宗方濟各，《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭 (2013年11月23日)，119。

9 同上，120。

10 參閱：教宗方濟各，於協調大會時對拉丁美洲主教會議領導人致詞，里約熱內盧，2013年7月28日，5，4；同上，與聖職人員、獻身生活者和牧靈委員會成員會議時致詞，亞西西，2013年10月4日。

11 參閱：梵二，《教會在現代世界牧職憲章》(1965年12月7日)，1。

道聆聽「不光是聽」。¹² 這是一種互相聆聽，彼此都有所得著。平信徒、主教團、羅馬主教：大家都在聆聽對方，都在聆聽聖神，那「真理的神」(若十四17)，好能聽見祂「對各教會說的話。」(默二7)

世界主教代表會議匯聚了教會各生活層面進行的聆聽過程。這會議的進程，以聆聽天主子民來開始，藉此「參與基督的先知職務」，¹³ 因而符合教會在第一個千年時特別珍重的原則：「與眾相關之事應由眾人商議」(「*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet*」)。繼續下來，這會議的進程便是聆聽牧者。主教們透過與會教長，整個教會以信仰的守護者、詮釋者和見證者的真正身份而行事，為此要謹慎地把這信仰與變幻多端的公眾輿論潮流分辨出來。我在去年的會議前夕曾說：「我們為出席世界主教代表會議的教長首先向聖神祈求的，是賜予他們聆聽之恩：要聆聽天主，好讓我們與祂一起聽到祂子民的聲音；要聆聽祂的子民，直至我們符合天主召喚我們去遵行的意願。」¹⁴ 會議的進程以聆聽羅馬主教為巔峰，他奉召要以「全體信友的牧者和導師」身份講話，¹⁵ 不是基於他的個人信念，而是以

12 《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，171。

13 梵二，《教會憲章》，12。

14 教宗方濟各，在以家庭為題的世界主教代表會議守夜祈禱致詞，2014年10月4日。

15 第一屆梵蒂岡大公會議，《永恆的牧人》(*Pastor Aeternus*) 教義憲章，(1870年7月18日)，第四章：《公教會之信仰與倫理教義選集》，3074。參閱：《天主教法典》

「整個教會的信仰」(*fides totius Ecclesiae*)的最高見證人，及「使教會服從和符合天主聖意、基督福音和教會傳統的保證人」¹⁶身份講話。

世界主教代表會議的運作，常應「與伯多祿一起，並在伯多祿權下」(*cum Petro et sub Petro*)——不僅是「與伯多祿一起」，還要「在伯多祿權下」——這並非一個自由上的限制，而是團結一致的保證。因為按照主的意願，教宗「對主教們和信友群眾，是一個持久性的、可見的統一中心和基礎。」¹⁷與此有密切關係的，就是梵二所採用的「聖統共融」(*hierarchica communio*)觀念：眾主教們以主教共融關係，與羅馬主教保持聯繫（「與伯多祿一起」*cum Petro*），同時在聖統上，服從這作為主教團領導人的羅馬主教（「在伯多祿權下」*sub Petro*）。¹⁸

「共議精神」(*Synodality*)作為教會的組成元素之一，能給我們一個極適合的理解模式，去明瞭聖統職務本身。我們若像金口聖若望所說的，明白到

第749條1項。

16 教宗方濟各，世界主教代表會議第三屆非常務會議致詞，2014年10月18日。

17 參閱：第一屆梵蒂岡大公會議，《永恆的牧人》(*Pastor Aeternus*)教義憲章，序言：《公教會之信仰與倫理教義選集》，3051。

18 參閱：梵二，《教會憲章》，22；《主教在教會內牧靈職務法令》（1965年10月28日），4。

「教會與主教會議是一而二、二而一」，¹⁹正如教會無非就是天主的羊群「同道偕行」，沿著歷史的大路前去與主基督相遇，如此我們便能明白到，在教會內沒有人可「高舉」自己於別人以上。相反的，每人在教會內都應「貶抑」自己，而因在這旅途上為弟兄姊妹服務。

耶穌建立了一個以宗徒集團為首的教會，當中的伯多祿宗徒就是「磐石」（參閱：瑪十六18），他要堅固自己弟兄的信德（參閱：路廿二32）。但在這教會內，就如同一個倒裝金字塔般，頂尖是位於基層以下。因此，那行使職權的人被稱為「僕役」（*ministers*），因為按這詞的原義，是指眾人中最小的。每位主教為天主子民服務時，按他受託照顧的信友團體而言，就是「基督之代表」（*vicarius Christi*），²⁰而這基督就是那在最後餐中屈身為宗徒們濯足的那一位（參閱：若十三1~15）。從同樣的角度來看，伯多祿的繼承人，不外就是「天主眾僕之僕」（*servus servorum Dei*）。²¹

我們絕不可忘記這事實！對耶穌的門徒而言，那昔日、今日和永久的唯一權柄，就是服務的權柄；那唯一的力量，就是十字架的力量。我們的師傅對我們說：「你們知道：外邦人有首長主宰他們，有大

19 金口聖若望，《*Explicatio in Ps.*》149：希臘教父集，55，493。

20 參閱：梵二，《教會憲章》，27。

21 參閱：教宗方濟各，世界主教代表會議第三屆非常務會議致詞，2014年10月18日。

臣管轄他們。在你們中卻不可這樣；誰若願意在你們中成為大的，就當作你們的僕役；誰若願意在你們中為首，就當作你們的奴僕」（瑪廿25~27）。「在你們中卻不可這樣」這句話，正觸及教會奧蹟的核心，我們從這句話得到必要的啟迪，以明白我們的聖統服務。

在一個共議性的教會中，世界主教代表會議是共融動力的最明確表現，對教會作的一切決定具有啟導性。

實踐「共議精神」的第一個層面，是在各地方教會內。《天主教法典》先提及教區會議這崇高機制，司鐸和平信徒要藉它與當地主教合作，促成整個教會團體的福祉。²² 法典繼而用了很大篇幅，討論那些在地方教會內通稱為「共融機制」的組織：包括司鐸諮議會、參議會、詠禱司鐸班和牧靈議會。²³ 只有當這些組織連接著「基層」，即當他們由信友及其日常問題出發時，一個共議性的教會才能成形：換言之，即使在這些機制會令人煩厭的時候，仍要珍惜它們，視之為聆聽和分享的機會。

第二個層面就是教省、分區、全區會議，及尤其是主教團。²⁴ 我們要慎思如何透過這些架構，更有效

22 參閱：《天主教法典》，第460~468條。

23 參閱：同上，第495~514條。

24 參閱：同上，第431~459條。

地產生「集體」（*collegiality*）形式的中介建議，這或許要靠整合或更新某些古老教會架構的形式而達致。梵二希望這些架構能促進主教的「集體」精神，但這期望依然未能完全實現。我們仍在路上，在中途的階段。如我曾說過的，在一個共議性的教會裡，「若教宗代替地方主教去分辨他們區域內出現的問題，這絕非上策。在這個意義上，我意識到有必要去推行健康的『權力下放』。」²⁵

最後才是普世教會的層面。在這層面上，代表著所有天主教主教的世界主教代表會議，表達出在一個全面共議性的教會內的「主教集體性」（*episcopal collegiality*）。²⁶ 這裡有兩個不同的用語：「主教集體性」和一個「全面共議性的教會」。這層面顯示出「感性上的集體性」（*collegialitas affectiva*），但在某情況下，也可變成一個「實際的」集體性，使主教們彼此聯合，並與教宗聯合，共同關愛天主的子民。²⁷

投身於一個對共議性的教會的承諾——這是我們共有的使命，但各按上主委託給他的角色——具有重

25 教宗方濟各，《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，16。參閱：同上，32。

26 參閱：梵二，《主教在教會內牧靈職務法令》，5；《天主教法典》，第342~348條。

27 參閱：聖若望保祿二世，《羊群的牧者》世界主教代表會議後宗座勸諭（2003年10月16日），8。

要的合一意義。因此，當我最近與君士坦丁堡宗主教區的代表團談話時，我重申了這信念：「只要仔細研究：在教會生活中，這共識原則的領導者所作的服務應如何運作，便能大大改善我們教會間的關係。」²⁸

我深信在一個共識性的教會內，可得到更多有關如何履行伯多祿首席身份的啟迪。教宗自身並不凌駕教會之上；而是以一個受洗者的身份在教會內，並在主教的集團中作主教之一，同時奉召——以伯多祿繼承人的身份——領導羅馬的教會，而這教會在愛德中作一切教會的領導。²⁹

在我重申急需考量「教宗職位上的皈依」的同時，³⁰我很願意複述我的前輩教宗若望保祿二世的話：「作為羅馬主教，我完全意識到，如同我在這篇文告中再次肯定的，基督熱切地渴望所有那些團體，都有完整而有形的共融，即那些因天主信實的德能，而祂的聖神居住在其中的那些團體。我確信我在這一方面有特別的責任，首先在承認大部份基督徒團體對大公主義的渴望，然後要留心，在必要時我要尋找一個行使首席權的方法，既不放棄使命的本質，而卻又向新情勢開放。」³¹

28 教宗方濟各，向君士坦丁堡普世牧首區代表致詞，2015年6月27日。

29 參閱：安提約基雅的聖依納爵，《*Epistula ad Romanos, Proemium*》：希臘教父集，5，686。

30 教宗方濟各，《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，32。

31 聖若望保祿二世，《願他們合而為一》宗座通諭（1995年5

我們的目光也延伸至全人類。正當世人一面宣揚參與、團結和公共行政上的透明度，同時卻把整個民族的生死存亡，置於少數權力集團的掌握時，此時，一個共識性的教會，就好像一面在列國萬邦中高舉的旗幟（參閱：依十一-12）。作為一個與男女眾人「同道偕行」和分擔歷史陣痛的教會，讓我們憧憬未來美好的前程，重新發現各民族的不可侵犯的尊嚴，以及權柄作為服務的功能，這亦能有助於建設一個建立正義與博愛上的公民社會，從而為未來的世代締造一個更美好和更人性化的世界。³² 謝謝各位。

（台灣地區主教團與香港教區 合譯）

月25日），95。

32 參閱：教宗方濟各，《福音的喜樂》宗座勸諭，186~192；《願祢受讚頌》通諭（2015年5月24日），156~162。

以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會

世界主教代表會議 第十六屆 常務會議



*1. 各部會、獻身生活(UISG-USG 聯合會及聯盟)、平信徒協會、大專院校

*2. 非洲(SECAM)、大洋洲(FBCO)、亞洲(FABC)、中東(CPCO)、歐洲(CEE)、拉丁美洲(CELAM)、北美洲(USCCB+CCCB)



世界主教代表會議程序

「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」

世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議

簡介2021年4月24日教宗方濟各接見世界主教代表會議樞機秘書長時所批准的舉行應屆世界主教代表會議進程。

1. 「天主期望第三個千年的教會應作的，正是走這條『共議精神』的路線。祂要求我們做的，在某意義上已見於『會議』（synod）一詞內。『共議』的觀念——包括平信徒、牧者、羅馬主教在內——容易表達於言詞，卻難於實踐」（「教宗方濟各在世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念上致詞」，2015年10月17日）。因此，下屆世界主教代表會議會議的主題將會是：「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」。
2. 共議精神實屬教會的本質，是她基本的事實，她亦因此以福傳為終向。這是教會存在的方式，一個為今日世界的先知性典範。「就如身體只是一

個，卻有許多肢體；身體所有的肢體雖多，仍是一個身體：基督也是這樣」（格前十二21）。奧思定也以類似的思想講論「基督全體」（參閱：《講道集》，341），頭與眾肢體共成一個不可分離的結合。只有與基督元首結合，才能明白身體的肢體多元性能令教會更充實，摒除任何一律硬性的劃一誘惑。這既是藉聖神力量而達致的多元性合一，教會在踏上同一進程時，便要開創新的途徑。

3. 世界主教代表會議是匯聚的動力點，因而要在教會生活的每個層面上共同聆聽聖神（參閱：〈教宗方濟各在世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念上致詞〉，2015年10月17日）。這不單是個慶典，更是個帶動天主子民、全體主教和羅馬主教一起共襄盛舉，各按其功能分工合作的進程。（參閱：〈瑪里奧·格雷克樞機在擢升新樞機的樞密會議中向教宗致詞〉，2020年11月28日）

舉行世界主教代表會議的程序

4. 一體及唯一的天主教會，是在各地方教會中和藉著它們而存在，而鑑於各地方教會有效地為了整個奧體所作的貢獻，亦是有益於各地方教會自身（參閱：《教會憲章》23），因此，只有在這些個別地方教會都參與其中時，才能有真正完整世界主教代表會議進程。要有地方教會的真正參與，其他的教會體就必須投入於這進程，例如東方天主教主教代表會議，個別教會內的獨立議

會和大會，各國、各地區和各大洲的主教團組織等。

5. 這會議的進程以隆重揭幕禮開始，會議分三階段進行：

5.1. 世界主教代表會議揭幕禮：2021年10月

這次世界主教代表會議進程，將分別在梵蒂岡及各地方教會展開。

5.1.1. 2021年10月9~10日，教宗在梵蒂岡主持正式揭幕儀式。

- a. 揭幕儀式及反省時刻
- b. 禮儀祈禱及舉行感恩祭

5.1.2. 2021年10月17日星期日，各地方教會舉行正式揭幕禮。

各地教區主教主持同樣事項：

- a. 揭幕儀式及反省時刻
- b. 祈禱儀式及舉行感恩祭

5.2. 在各地方教會及其他相應教會體的階段：2021年10月至2022年4月

這階段是為諮詢天主子民（參閱：《主教共融》

*Episcopalis Communio*宗座憲章，第5節，第2段），使世界主教代表會議的進程，藉聆聽所有已受洗者而進行，他們就是在信仰上——不能錯誤的——信仰意識的主體。

以下程序能有助諮詢及眾人的參與。

世界主教代表會議總祕書處：

5.2.1. 世界主教代表會議總祕書處將向每個教區發送會議的〈準備文件〉，連同一份問卷和一個附帶一些建議的〈手冊〉（*Vademecum*），用來在各教區進行諮詢。

5.2.2. 這份準備文件及〈手冊〉也會發送致羅馬教廷各部會、獻身生活聯合會、其他獻身生活團體聯盟（USG - UISG），各國國際性的平信徒運動組織，以及各天主教大專學院／神學院。

地方教會及主教團或相應的教會體：

5.2.3. 各教區主教須任命一位教區的負責人（或一個小組）去承擔世界主教代表會議的諮詢工作，他（們）要與所隸屬的主教團聯繫，並參與個別教會（在2021年10月前）諮詢過程的所有步驟。

5.2.4. 各主教團須任命一位負責人（或一個小組）去與各教區指定的負責人和（在2021年10月前）世界主教代表會議總祕書處聯絡。

地方教會：

- 5.2.5. 在各地方教會的諮詢將透過由法典所指定的組織進行，並且不排除可讓這次諮詢更真實和有效的其他方式（參閱：《主教共融》宗座憲章，第6號）。
- 5.2.6. 在各地方教會，天主子民的諮詢，將以**世界主教代表會議會前的一場會議**結束，作為教區辨別階段的高峰。
- 5.2.7. 在教區層面的階段結束後，每個地方教會須在主教團所定的限期內，向之提交其成果。在各東方禮教會，其成果則提交予相關的教會體。

主教團或相應的教會體：

- 5.2.8. 主教們隨即召開主教團會議，開始一段共同辨別的時期。他們應聆聽聖神在那些託付給他們的個別教會裡所喚起的一切感召。
- 5.2.9. 在撰寫總結報告的過程中，參與的人，包括主教團所指定的負責人及／或其小組。獲選將參加這次世界主教代表會議常務會議的代表，其提名在得到教宗批准後，也應參與總結報告的撰寫過程。
- 5.2.10. 該總結報告應（在2022年4月前）連同各個別教會的成果呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

其他教會體的成果報告：

- 5.2.11. 羅馬教廷各部會、各天主教大專學院／神學院、國際總會長聯合會、其他獻身生活聯合會及聯盟，以及國際性的平信徒運動，也必須（在2022年4月前）把他們的成果報告呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

世界主教代表會議總祕書處：

- 5.2.12. 世界主教代表會議總祕書處將在（2022年9月前）起草《工作文件》（*Instrumentum Laboris*）的初稿。

5.3. 大洲階段：2022年9月至2023年3月

此階段目的，是藉著對話的方式來討論《工作文件》的初稿，在各大洲獨有的文化特色啟迪下，作出最後的辨別。

世界主教代表會議總祕書處：

- 5.3.1. 世界主教代表會議總祕書處會（在2022年9月）發布《工作文件》初稿。

國際主教團會議：

- 5.3.2. 由各主教團組成的每一個「國際主教團協會」（譯者註：如FABC／亞洲主教團協會）須（在2022年9月前）任命一位負責人，作為

聯絡員，與各主教團和世界主教代表會議總秘書處保持聯絡。

- 5.3.3. 世界主教代表會議前在大洲會議中所作的辨別——為各地方教會的主教及天主子民的其他成員參與世界主教代表會議而訂立準則。
- 5.3.4. 各「國際主教團協會」在結束時將（在2023年3月）起草一份最終文件，呈交世界主教代表會議總秘書處。

其他的成果報告：

- 5.3.5. 在大洲層級的世界主教代表會議前置會議正在進行之際，本文件也建議專家間的國際會議同步進行，他們可（在2023年3月前）把他們的成果報告呈交世界主教代表會議總秘書處。

世界主教代表會議總秘書處：

- 5.3.6. 世界主教代表會議總秘書處將（在2023年6月前）進行起草《工作文件》第二稿。
- 5.4. 普世教會階段：2023年10月
- 5.4.1. 世界主教代表會議總秘書處將把《工作文件》的第二稿發送給世界主教代表會議常務會議的與會者。
- 5.4.2. 世界主教代表會議的慶祝活動將（於2023年

10月）依照《主教共融（*Episcopalis Communio*）》宗座憲章中訂定的程序在羅馬舉行。

6. 世界主教代表會議各階段的進度，能讓所有主教在教會生活的不同領域（地方教會、主教團或相應的教會體，以及國際主教團會議），落實聆聽天主子民。如此便能確保各人參與世界主教代表會議的進程，並能按教宗方濟各在世界主教代表會議成立五十週年時所強調的，以實踐共識精神來落實主教的集體特性。
7. 在合作精神下，世界主教代表會議總秘書處隨時都準備好，為澄清而作說明，及關心世界主教代表會議進程的各時刻，這基本上就是一項屬靈的辨別事工。「彼此聆聽對方，大家共同聆聽聖神」。（「教宗方濟各在世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念上致詞」，2015年10月17日）

發自梵蒂岡

2021年5月21日

祕書長

瑪里奧·格雷克樞機

「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」

世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議

地方教會及其他教會體的籌備階段
2021年10月至2022年4月

世界主教代表會議總祕書處	地方教會及其他教會體	主教團（或東方教會主教代表會議）
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 籌備文件 問卷 諮詢手冊（2021年9月） 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 委任教區負責人 最後委任小組（2021年10月前） 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 委任主教團負責人 最後委任小組（2021年10月前）
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 諮詢羅馬教廷各部會 諮詢國際總會長聯會及奉獻生活聯會及聯盟 諮詢平信徒運動組織 諮詢大專學院及神學院 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 推廣及組織諮詢天主子民的工作（地方教會應訂定的進程；主教團可能進行的對話） 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 教區層面的世界主教代表會議前辨別會（在諮詢天主子民後） 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 向世界主教代表會議總祕書處呈交教區成果綜合報告（呈交的最後日期由主教團自定） 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 主教團的辨別工作：針對各地方教會呈交的成果（進程由主教團自定）

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 主教團向世界主教代表會議總祕書處呈交綜合報告（2022年4月）
草擬第一份工作文件（2022年9月）		委任出席世界主教代表會議代表

大洲階段
2022年9月至2023年3月

世界主教代表會議總祕書處	大洲主教團會議
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 發送第一份工作文件（2022年9月） 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 委任一位洲際負責人（負責人） 可成立小組（2022年9月前）
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 大洲辨別會議（進程由國際主教團會議自定）
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 專家間的國際會議 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 草擬最後文件（2023年3月前）
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 向世界主教代表會議總祕書處呈交文件（2023年3月）
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 草擬第二份工作文件（2023年6月） 	

普世教會階段
2023年10月

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議（2023年10月）
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（台灣地區主教團與香港教區合譯）

備註：世界主教代表會議

2021年5月21日

世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議

「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」

教宗方濟各於2021年4月24日，為召開世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議，核准了一個新的日程。這屆「以共融、參與及使命來體現共議性的教會」為主題的世界主教代表會議，訂定在2022年10月起舉行。其後，世界主教代表會議總祕書處，在取得了常務委員會同意後，建議一個嶄新的方式來召開世界主教代表會議，一起往大會前進。

這次世界主教代表會議舉行的過程分成三個階段，從2021年10月至2023年10月，先後經過教區層次及大洲的階段，其結果會草擬為兩份《工作文件》（*Instrumentum Laboris*），到最後才會到普世教會的層次。

世界主教代表會議是教會各層級在聖神內彼此聆聽的匯聚

動力點（參閱：教宗方濟各在2015年10月17日世界主教代表會議成立五十週年紀念的致詞）。世界主教代表會議程序中的不同階段使之能夠真正地聆聽天主子民的聲音，並保證所有教會成員都能藉此參與這次世界主教代表會。這並非只是教會的一件盛事，更是一個過程，使天主子民、整個主教團體，以及羅馬主教能集思廣益，共襄盛舉。

世界主教代表會議第十六屆常務會議之程序進行如下：

- 世界主教代表會議揭幕禮（2021年10月）

世界主教代表會議的揭幕禮將在梵蒂岡及世界各教區進行。教宗將於10月9日及10日在梵蒂岡主持會議的揭幕儀式。

而各教區在自己的主教指示之下，在10月17日星期日，以同樣的方式舉行世界主教代表會議揭幕儀式。

- 教區階段（2021年10月~2022年4月）

此階段旨在諮詢天主的子民（參閱：《主教共融》宗座憲章（*Episcopalis Communio*），第5節，第2段），以確保世界主教代表會議的過程有聆聽已受洗者全體——在信仰上不能錯誤的信仰意識的主體。

為促進諮詢全體天主子民及其參與，此階段的進行日程如下：

世界主教代表會議總祕書處

世界主教代表會議總祕書處將向每個教區發送會議的〈準備文件〉，連同一份問卷和一個附帶一些建議的〈手冊〉（*Vademecum*），用來在各教區進行諮詢。

這份準備文件也會發送致羅馬教廷各部會、獻身生活聯合會、其他獻身生活團體聯盟（USG - UISG），各國際性的平信徒運動組織，以及各天主教大專學院／神學院。

教區（個別教會）和各主教團或其他相應的教會體

各教區主教須任命一位教區的負責人（或一個小組）去承擔主教會議的諮詢工作，他（們）要與所隸屬的主教團聯繫，並參與個別教會（在2021年10月前）諮詢過程的所有步驟。

各主教團須任命一位負責人（或一個小組）去與各教區指定的負責人和（在2021年10月前）世界主教代表會議總祕書處聯絡。

教區

在各教區的諮詢將透過由法典所指定的組織進行，並且不排除可讓這次諮詢更真實和有效的其他方式（參閱：《主教共融》（*Episcopalis Communio*）宗座憲章，第6號）。

在各教區，天主子民的諮詢，將以世界主教代表會議會前

的一場會議結束，作為教區辨別階段的高峰。

在教區層面的階段結束後，每個教區須在主教團所定的限期內，向之提交其成果。在各東方禮教會，其成果則提交予相關的教會體。

主教團或相應的教會體

主教們隨即召開主教團會議，開始一段共同辨別的時期。他們應聆聽聖神在那些託付給他們的個別教會裡所喚起的一切感召。

在撰寫總結報告的過程中，參與的人，包括主教團所指定的負責人或其小組。獲選將參加這次世界主教代表會議常務會議的代表，其提名在得到教宗批准後，也應參與總結報告的撰寫過程。

該總結報告應（在2022年4月前）連同各個別教會的成果呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

其他教會體的成果報告

羅馬教廷各部會、各天主教大專學院／神學院、國際總會長聯合會、其他獻身生活聯合會及聯盟，以及國際性的平信徒運動，也必須（在2022年4月前）把他們的成果報告呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

主教會議總祕書處

世界主教代表會議總祕書處將（在2022年9月前）起草《工作文件》（*Instrumentum Laboris*）的初稿。

- 大洲階段（2022年9月~2023年3月）

此階段目的，是藉著對話的方式來討論《工作文件》的初稿，在各大洲獨有的文化特色啟迪下，作出最後的辨別。

世界主教代表會議總祕書處

世界主教代表會議總祕書處會（在2022年9月）發布《工作文件》初稿。

國際主教團會議

由各主教團組成的每一個「國際主教團協會」（譯者註：如FABC／亞洲主教團協會）須（在2022年9月前）任命一位負責人，作為聯絡員，與各主教團和世界主教代表會議總祕書處保持聯絡。

世界主教代表會議前在大洲會議中所作的辨別——為各地方教會的主教及天主子民的其他成員參與世界主教代表會議而訂立準則。

各「國際主教團協會」在結束時將（在2023年3月）起草一份最終文件，呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

其他教會體的成果報告

在大洲層級的國際性主教會議前置會議正在進行之際，本文件也建議專家間的國際會議同步進行，他們可（在2023年3月前）把他們的成果報告呈交世界主教代表會議總祕書處。

世界主教代表會議總祕書處

世界主教代表會議總祕書處將（在2023年6月前）進行起草《工作文件》第二稿。

- 普世教會階段（2023年10月）

世界主教代表會議總祕書處將把《工作文件》的第二稿發送給世界主教代表會議常務會議的與會者。

主教會議的慶祝活動將（於2023年10月）依照《主教共融》（*Episcopalis Communio*）宗座憲章中訂定的程序在羅馬舉行。

（台灣地區主教團與澳門教區合譯）



SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM

Vatican, 20 May 2021

Prat. N. 210114

Dear brother in the episcopate,

I am writing to you personally to send you the itinerary for the next Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission,” which you will find in the attached documents. The Holy Father has asked me to share with every diocesan bishop his sincere desire that we undertake this path together, so that we all might grow together through this concrete experience of synodality. Often, the Holy Father has invited me to remain “open to everything that comes from the local churches.”

Given the significance that this synodal journey has for the good of both the Universal and local church, if it were possible I would come and present it personally to every bishop. I would have gladly done so not only because its contents need to be communicated with due delicacy, but also

because I have wished from the beginning of this ecclesial adventure to be close to all of you so as to encourage and support you on this journey we make together with the People of God entrusted to you. Since we are all ‘connected’, the contribution of everyone is precious in this process of mutual listening to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, to emphasise that this synodal path is a shared journey, the Holy Father will celebrate the opening of the Synod in the Vatican, 9-10 October 2021. The following Sunday, 17 October 2021, each of you will celebrate the opening of the Synod in your own diocese.

I would like to emphasise the importance of this phase of diocesan consultation, which will culminate in a pre-synodal meeting. In this phase, we will ‘listen’ to the whole People of God, without exception, with particular care to involve also those who are further away and are consulted with greater difficulty. We remember the Rule of St Benedict wherein he writes, “every time some important issue has to be dealt with in the monastery [in the diocese], the abbot is to summon the whole community and personally explain the matter in question [...]. But we said to consult the whole community, because often it is to the youngest that the Lord reveals the best solution.”(Chapter 3)

Therefore, each bishop will appoint a diocesan contact person (team) for the synodal consultation, who can act as a liaison and point of reference.

Your Eminences/Beatitudes/Excellences THEIR SEES

As I write this letter, I am aware of the many difficulties caused by the pandemic, as well as those countries suffering from war and violence. I hope that this synodal process, in a sense of renewed communion, might help the local churches notwithstanding the great challenges they face. I am also aware of the many countries and dioceses who have already embarked on a local synodal journey. With God's grace, we will find creative ways to articulate diocesan dynamics, agendas, and priorities in preparation for the next Synod. I am sure that our common love for Jesus and his Church will help us to walk this path together.

At the same time, we would be grateful to those brother bishops who have synodal experiences already underway, and are willing to share with us unpublished testimonies of how they have seen the Holy Spirit acting in the midst of the People of God. They may also wish to share with us the moments and ways in which they have been surprised by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Together with my colleagues in the General Secretariat, we are also preparing various training and information aids to accompany the Preparatory Document. Furthermore, before October 2021, we hope to be able to contact every Episcopal Conference to dialogue directly in this preliminary phase. In any case, any bishop may contact us so that we might help with any need (synodus@synod.va; m.grech@synod.va).

Along with the itinerary for this Synod, is a copy of Pope Francis' speech in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015. The Holy Father himself has explicitly asked me to bring to

your attention the foundational importance of this text for our synodal journey.

This upcoming 21 May 2021 at Midday (Rome time), the Press Office of the Holy See in the Bollettino will release the documents enclosed in this letter. Until that moment, all the documents and content of this letter are under embargo.

I sincerely thank you for all the work you will undertake and I ask for your continued prayers for the success of this synodal journey.



Mario Card. Grech
General Secretary

Attached:

1. Itinerary for the Synod
2. Infographic for the Itinerary for the Synod
3. Speech of Pope Francis in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015

N.B. a copy of these documents will be sent through the Apostolic Nunciature



The Holy See

CEREMONY COMMEMORATING THE 50th
ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE
SYNOD OF BISHOPS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 17 October 2015*

*Your Beatitudes,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Brothers and Sisters,*

As the Ordinary General Assembly is in full session, this commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops is, for all of us, a cause for joy, praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. From the time of the Second Vatican Council until the present Assembly, we have experienced ever more intensely the necessity and beauty of

“journeying together”.

On this happy occasion I offer cordial greetings to Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, the Secretary General, the Undersecretary, Archbishop Fabio Fabene, the Officials, the Consultors and the other collaborators in the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, those who are behind the scenes and work late each evening. I also greet and thank the Synod Fathers and the other participants in the current Assembly, as well as all those present.

At this time we also wish to remember those who, in the course of the last fifty years, have offered their services to the Synod, beginning with the successive General Secretaries: Cardinal Władysław Rubin, Cardinal Jozef Tomko, Cardinal Jan Pieter Schotte and Archbishop Nikola Eterović. I also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to those — both living and deceased — who contributed so generously and competently to the Synod’s work.

From the beginning of my ministry as Bishop of Rome, I sought to enhance the Synod, which is one of the most precious legacies of the Second Vatican Council.¹ For Blessed Paul VI, the Synod of Bishops was meant to reproduce the image of the Ecumenical Council and reflect its spirit and method.² Pope Paul foresaw that the organization of

¹ Cf. FRANCIS, Letter to the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, on the elevation of the Undersecretary, Mgr Fabio Fabene, to the episcopal dignity, 1 April 2014.

² Cf. BLESSED PAUL VI, Address for the Opening of the first Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 30 September 1967.

the Synod could “be improved upon with the passing of time”.³ Twenty years later, Saint John Paul II echoed that thought when he stated that “this instrument might be further improved. Perhaps collegial pastoral responsibility could be more fully expressed in the Synod”.⁴ In 2006, Benedict XVI approved several changes to the *Ordo Synodi Episcoporum*, especially in light of the provisions of the *Code of Canon Law* and the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, which had been promulgated in the meantime.⁵

We must continue along this path. The world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.

What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word “synod”. Journeying together — laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome — is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice.

After stating that the people of God is comprised of all the baptized who are called to “be a spiritual house and a holy

³ BLESSED PAUL VI, *Motu proprio Apostolica Sollicitudo* (15 September 1965), Proemium.

⁴ SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address for the Conclusion of VI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 29 October 1983.

⁵ Cf. AAS 98 (2006), 755-779.

priesthood”,⁶ the Second Vatican Council went on to say that “the whole body of the faithful, who have an anointing which comes from the holy one (cf. 1 Jn 2:20,27), cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people of God, when ‘from the bishops to the last of the faithful’ it manifests a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals”.⁷ These are the famous words *infallible “in credendo”*.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I emphasized that “the people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible *in credendo*”,⁸ and added that “all the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients”.⁹ The *sensus fidei* prevents a rigid separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church.¹⁰

⁶ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964) 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸ FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 119.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰ Cf. FRANCIS, Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordination Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, 28 July 2013, 5,4; ID., Address on the occasion of a meeting

Such was the conviction underlying my desire that the people of God should be consulted in the preparation of the two phases of the Synod on the family, as is ordinarily done with each *Lineamenta*. Certainly, a consultation of this sort would never be sufficient to perceive the *sensus fidei*. But how could we speak about the family without engaging families themselves, listening to their joys and their hopes, their sorrows and their anguish?¹¹ Through the answers given to the two questionnaires sent to the particular Churches, we had the opportunity at least to hear some of those families speak to issues which closely affect them and about which they have much to say.

A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realizes that listening “is more than simply hearing”.¹² It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit of truth” (*Jn 14:17*), in order to know what he “says to the Churches” (*Rev2:7*).

The Synod of Bishops is the point of convergence of this listening process conducted at every level of the Church’s life. The Synod process begins by listening to the people of God, which “shares also in Christ’s prophetic office”,¹³ according

with Clergy, Consecrated Persons and members of Pastoral Councils, Assisi, 4 October 2013.

11 Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), 1.

12 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 171.

13 SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic

to a principle dear to the Church of the first millennium: “*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet*”. The Synod process then continues by listening to the pastors. Through the Synod Fathers, the bishops act as authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church, which they need to discern carefully from the changing currents of public opinion. On the eve of last year’s Synod I stated: “For the Synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us”.¹⁴ The Synod process culminates in listening to the Bishop of Rome, who is called to speak as “pastor and teacher of all Christians”,¹⁵ not on the basis of his personal convictions but as the supreme witness to the *fides totius Ecclesiae*, “the guarantor of the obedience and the conformity of the Church to the will of God, to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Tradition of the Church”.¹⁶

The fact that the Synod always acts *cum Petro et sub Petro* — indeed, not only *cum Petro*, but also *sub Petro* — is not a limitation of freedom, but a guarantee of unity. For the Pope is, by will of the Lord, “the perpetual and visible source

Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

14 FRANCIS, Address at the Prayer Vigil for the Synod on the Family, 4 October 2014.

15 FIRST VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (18 July 1870), ch. IV: Denz. 3074. Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can. 749, § 1.

16 FRANCIS, Address to the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 18 October 2014.

and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful”.¹⁷ Closely related to this is the concept of “*hierarchica communio*” as employed by the Second Vatican Council: the Bishops are linked to the Bishop of Rome by the bond of episcopal communion (*cum Petro*) while, at the same time, hierarchically subject to him as head of the college (*sub Petro*).¹⁸

Synodality, as a constitutive element of the Church, offers us the most appropriate interpretive framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself. If we understand, as Saint John Chrysostom says, that “Church and Synod are synonymous”,¹⁹ inasmuch as the Church is nothing other than the “journeying together” of God’s flock along the paths of history towards the encounter with Christ the Lord, then we understand too that, within the Church, no one can be “raised up” higher than others. On the contrary, in the Church, it is necessary that each person “lower” himself or herself, so as to serve our brothers and sisters along the way.

Jesus founded the Church by setting at her head the Apostolic

¹⁷ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 23. cf. FIRST VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Prologue: Denz. 3051.

¹⁸ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 22; Decree *Christus Dominus* (28 October 1965), 4.

¹⁹ SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Explicatio in Ps.* 149: PG 55, 493.

College, in which the Apostle Peter is the “rock” (cf. *Mt* 16:18), the one who must confirm his brethren in the faith (cf. *Lk* 22:32). But in this Church, as in an inverted pyramid, the top is located beneath the base. Consequently, those who exercise authority are called “ministers”, because, in the original meaning of the word, they are the least of all. It is in serving the people of God that each bishop becomes, for that portion of the flock entrusted to him, *vicarius Christi*,²⁰ the vicar of that Jesus who at the Last Supper bent down to wash the feet of the Apostles (cf. *Jn* 13:1-15). And in a similar perspective, the Successor of Peter is nothing else if not the *servus servorum Dei*.²¹

Let us never forget this! For the disciples of Jesus, yesterday, today and always, the only authority is the authority of service, the only power is the power of the cross. As the Master tells us: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave” (*Mt* 20:25-27). *It shall not be so among you*: in this expression we touch the heart of the mystery of the Church, and we receive the enlightenment necessary to understand our hierarchical service.

²⁰ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 27.

²¹ Cf. FRANCIS, Address to the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 18 October 2014.

In a synodal Church, the Synod of Bishops is only the most evident manifestation of a dynamism of communion which inspires all ecclesial decisions.

The first level of the exercise of *synodality* is had in the particular Churches. After mentioning the noble institution of the Diocesan Synod, in which priests and laity are called to cooperate with the bishop for the good of the whole ecclesial community,²² the *Code of Canon Law* devote sample space to what are usually called “organs of communion” in the local Church: the presbyteral council, the college of consultors, chapters of canons and the pastoral council.²³ Only to the extent that these organizations keep connected to the “base” and start from people and their daily problems, can a synodal Church begin to take shape: these means, even when they prove wearisome, must be valued as an opportunity for listening and sharing.

The second level is that of Ecclesiastical Provinces and Ecclesiastical Regions, Particular Councils and, in a special way, Conferences of Bishops.²⁴ We need to reflect on how better to bring about, through these bodies, intermediary instances of *collegiality*, perhaps by integrating and updating certain aspects of the ancient ecclesiastical organization. The hope expressed by the Council that such bodies would help increase the spirit of episcopal *collegiality* has not yet been fully realized. We are still on the way, part-way there.

²² Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, cann. 460-468.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, cann. 495-514.

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, cann. 431-459.

In a synodal Church, as I have said, “it is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote around ‘decentralization’”.²⁵

The last level is that of the universal Church. Here the Synod of Bishops, representing the Catholic episcopate, becomes an expression of *episcopal collegiality* within an entirely synodal Church.²⁶ Two different phrases: “episcopal collegiality” and an “entirely synodal Church”. This level manifests the *collegialitas affectiva*, which can also become in certain circumstances “effective”, joining the Bishops among themselves and with the Pope in solicitude for the People God.²⁷

The commitment to build a synodal Church — a mission to which we are all called, each with the role entrusted him by the Lord — has significant ecumenical implications. For this reason, speaking recently to a delegation from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, I reaffirmed my conviction that “a careful examination of how, in the Church’s life, the principle of synodality and the service of the one who presides are articulated, will make a significant contribution

²⁵ FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 16. cf. *ibid.*, 32.

²⁶ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree *Christus Dominus*, 5; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, cann. 342-348.

²⁷ Cf. SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis* (16 October 2003), 8.

to the progress of relations between our Churches”.²⁸

I am persuaded that in a synodal Church, greater light can be shed on the exercise of the Petrine primacy. The Pope is not, by himself, above the Church; but within it as one of the baptized, and within the College of Bishops as a Bishop among Bishops, called at the same time — as Successor of Peter — to lead the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the Churches.²⁹

While reaffirming the urgent need to think about “a conversion of the papacy”,³⁰ I willingly repeat the words of my predecessor Pope John Paul II: “As Bishop of Rome I am fully aware [...]that Christ ardently desires the full and visible communion of all those Communities in which, by virtue of God’s faithfulness, his Spirit dwells. I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard, above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation”.³¹

Our gaze also extends to humanity as a whole. A synodal

²⁸ FRANCIS, Address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, 27 June 2015.

²⁹ Cf. SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Epistula ad Romanos*, Proemium: PG 5, 686.

³⁰ FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 32.

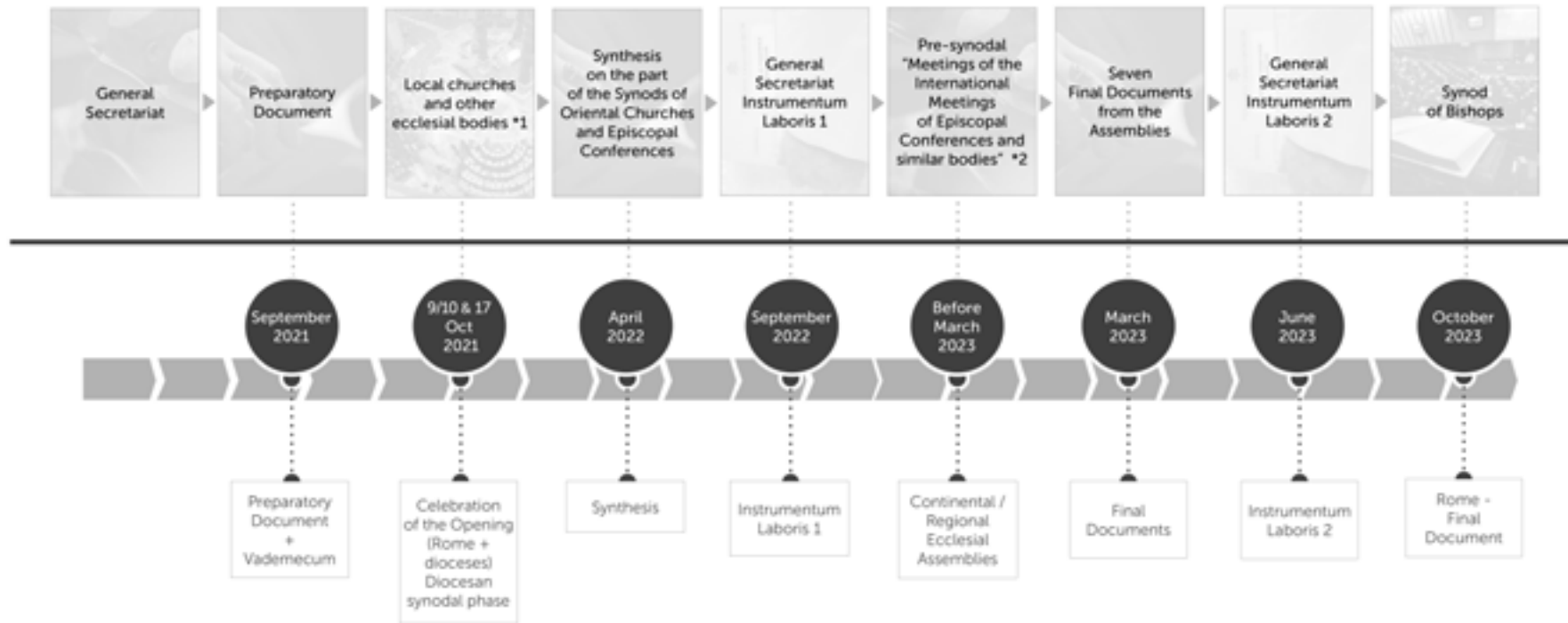
³¹ SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint* (25 May 1995), 95.

Church is like a standard lifted up among the nations (cf. *Is* 11:12) in a world which — while calling for participation, solidarity and transparency in public administration — often consigns the fate of entire peoples to the grasp of small but powerful groups. As a Church which “journeys together” with men and women, sharing the travails of history, let us cherish the dream that a rediscovery of the inviolable dignity of peoples and of the function of authority as service will also be able to help civil society to be built up in justice and fraternity, and thus bring about a more beautiful and humane world for coming generations.³² Thank you.

³² Cf. FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 186-192; Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 156-162.

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION

XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS



*1 Dicastries, Consecrated Life (USG-USG, UNIONS & FEDERATIONS), Associations of the Faithful, Institutions of Higher Education
 *2 Africa (SECAM), Oceania (OCBCO), Asia (FABC), Middle East (CPCOE), Europa (CEE), Latin America (CELAM), North America (USCCB+CCCC)





SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM

*“For a synodal Church: communion,
participation and mission”*

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

Presentation of the Programme for the celebration of the upcoming Synod approved by Pope Francis during his audience with Cardinal Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, 24 April 2021.

1. “It is precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium. What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word ‘synod.’ Journeying together — laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome — is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice.” (*Address of His Holiness, Pope Francis, Ceremony Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015*). For this reason, the theme of the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is,

For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.

2. Indeed, synodality refers to the very essence of the Church, her constitutive reality, and is thus oriented towards evangelization. It is an ecclesial way of being and a prophetic example for today’s world. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.” (1 Cor 12:12). In a similar way, Augustine speaks of the *Whole Christ* (cf. Sermon 341), head and members who form an indivisible and inseparable unity. Only in union with Christ the head, is it possible to understand the plurality of the members of the body, which enriches the Church, overcoming any temptation to uniformity. Since this is a unity in plurality in the power of the Spirit, the Church is called to open new paths whilst embarking on that same journey.
3. **The Synod of Bishops** is the dynamic point of convergence that calls for mutual listening to the Holy Spirit at every level of the Church’s life (cf. *Address of His Holiness, Pope Francis, Ceremony Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015*). It is not just an event, but also a process that involves in synergy the People of God, the College of Bishops and the Bishop of Rome, each according to their proper function (cf. *Address by Cardinal Mario Grech to the Holy Father in the Consistory for the creation of new cardinals, November 28, 2020*).

PROMGRAMME FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SYNOD

4. Considering that the local churches, in which and from which the one and only Catholic Church exists, contribute effectively to the good of the entire mystical body, which is also the body of the churches (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 23), the fullness of the synodal process can only truly exist if the local churches are involved that process. For a genuine participation of the local churches, there also must be the involvement of other ecclesial bodies in this process, such as, the Synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the Councils and Assemblies of the Churches *sui iuris*, and Episcopal Conferences, with their own national, regional, and continental entities.
5. This synodal journey will begin with a solemn opening and consist of three phases:

5.1. OPENING OF THE SYNOD: October 2021

This synodal journey will commence both in the Vatican and in the local churches.

- 5.1.1 Official Opening with the Holy Father in the Vatican: 9-10 October 2021.
- a. Opening session and time for reflection
 - b. Liturgical prayers and celebration of the Eucharist
- 5.1.2 Official Opening in each local church: Sunday 17 October 2021. The local diocesan bishop will celebrate the same programme:
- a. Opening session and time for reflection
 - a. Liturgical prayers and celebration of the Eucharist

5.2. PHASE IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES AND OTHER ECCLESIAL REALITIES: October 2021-April 2022

The objective of this phase is to consult the People of God (cf. *Episcopalis Communio*, 5,2) so that the synodal process is carried out through listening to all of the baptised, who are the subject of the *sensus fidei* – infallible – *in credendo*.

The following program will facilitate the consultation and participation of all.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS:

- 5.2.1. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will send a Preparatory Document, accompanied by a Questionnaire and a *Vademecum* with proposals for consultation in each local church.
- 5.2.2. The Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the Union of Superiors General - International Union Superiors General (USG - UISG) and other Unions and Federations of Consecrated life, international lay movements, and University - Faculties of Theology will also receive this Questionnaire and *Vademecum*.

LOCAL CHURCHES AND EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OR CORRESPONDING BODIES:

- 5.2.3. Each bishop will appoint a diocesan contact person (team) for the synodal consultation; they shall be a point of reference and link with the Episcopal Conference. They will accompany all the stages of the consultation process in the local church. (*Be-*

fore October 2021)

- 5.2.4. Each Episcopal Conference (or corresponding body) will also appoint a contact person responsible for liaising with both diocesan officials and with the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. *(Before October 2021)*

LOCAL CHURCHES:

- 5.2.5. Consultation in the local churches will include those groups of participation as envisioned in *Episcopalis Communio*, without excluding other modalities deemed appropriate for the consultation to be real and effective (cf. *Episcopalis Communio*, 6).
- 5.2.6. Consultation with the People of God in each local church will conclude with a **pre- synodal meeting**, which will be the culmination of diocesan discernment.
- 5.2.7. At the conclusion of the diocesan phase, each local church will submit their contributions to their Episcopal Conference on a date determined by the Episcopal Conference itself. The Eastern Churches will submit their contributions to their corresponding bodies.

EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OR CORRESPONDING BODIES:

- 5.2.8. A period of discernment will begin for bishops gathered in an assembly (Episcopal Conference). They will listen to what the Spirit has inspired in the churches entrusted to them.
- 5.2.9. Participants in the discernment period and the drafting of the synthesis include the contact person of the Episcopal Conference with regard to the synodal process and their team, as well as those representatives elected to participate in the Ordinary

General Assembly of the Synod, following their ratification by the Holy Father.

- 5.2.10. This synthesis will be sent to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops along with the contributions of each of the local churches. *(Before April 2022)*

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:

- 5.2.11. The Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the University - Faculties of Theology, the Union of Superiors General - International Union Superiors General (USG – UISG) and other Unions and Federations of Consecrated life, and international lay movements, shall also provide their own contributions to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. *(Before April 2022)*

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS:

- 5.2.12. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will proceed with the drafting of the first *Instrumentum Laboris*. *(Before September of 2022)*

5.3. CONTINENTAL PHASE: September 2022 - March 2023

The purpose of this phase is to promote dialogue at the continental level about the text of the first *Instrumentum Laboris* and deepen discernment within the specific cultural context of each continent.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS:

- 5.3.1. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will publish

and send the first *Instrumentum Laboris*. (September of 2022)

INTERNATIONAL REUNIONS OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES:

- 5.3.2. Each International Reunion of Episcopal Conferences will also appoint a contact person to liaise with both the Episcopal Conferences and the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. (Before September 2022)
- 5.3.3. Pre-synodal discernment in the continental Assemblies. The criteria for the participation of the residential bishops and other members of the People of God is to be established.
- 5.3.4. The Assemblies will conclude with the drafting of a final document to be sent to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. (March 2023)

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:

- 5.3.5. At the same time as the pre-synod meetings at the continental level, it is recommended that international assemblies of specialists also be held, who may send their contributions to the General Secretariat of the Synod. (March 2023)

GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD:

- 5.3.6. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will proceed to draft the second *Instrumentum Laboris*. (Before June 2023)

5.4. UNIVERSAL CHURCH PHASE: October 2023

- 5.4.1. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will send the

second *Instrumentum Laboris* to the participants of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

- 5.4.2. Celebration of the Synod of Bishops will take place in Rome according to the norms established in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*. (October 2023)

6. The articulation of the different phases of the synodal process makes possible a real listening to the People of God including all bishops at the different levels of ecclesial life (local churches, Episcopal Conferences or corresponding bodies, and International Reunions of Episcopal Conferences). In this way, the participation of all in the synodal process is guaranteed and the exercise of collegiality is configured within the exercise of synodality, as emphasized by Pope Francis on the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops.
7. In a spirit of collaboration, the General Secretariat of the Synod is open to clarify and accompany any moment of this synodal process, which must be, essentially, a spiritual event of discernment. “One listening to the others; and all listening to the Holy Spirit.”(Discourse of Pope Francis on the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015).



Mario Card. Grech
General Secretary

Vatican, 21 May 2021

“For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission”

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

PHASE IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES AND OTHER ECCLESIAL REALITIES

October 2021-April 2022

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS	LOCAL CHURCH AND OTHER ECCLESIAL BODIES	EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES (OR SYNODS OF EASTERN CHURCHES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory document • Questionnaire • <i>Vademecum</i> for consultation (September 2021) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of diocesan contact person • Eventual appointment of a team (before or October 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of contact person for the Episcopal Conference • Eventual appointment of a team (before October 2021)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia • Consultation with the International Union of Superiors General and Major Superiors of Consecrated Life • Consultation with associations of the faithful • Consultation with Faculties and Universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and organize consultation with the People of God (Process to be established by the local church; possible dialogue in the Episcopal Conference) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-synodal meeting for discernment at the diocesan level (after consultation with the People of God) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of the synthesis of the diocesan contributions to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops and the Episcopal Conference (Deadline to be decided by the Episcopal Conference) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment of the Episcopal Conference: work on the contributions sent by the local churches (Process to establish the Episcopal Conference)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of the synthesis of the Episcopal
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops (April 2022)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of the First <i>Instrumentum Laboris</i> (September 2022) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of representatives to the General Assembly

CONTINENTAL PHASE
September 2022 - March 2023

<i>GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS</i>	<i>INTERNATIONAL RE-UNIONS OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of the first <i>Instrumentum laboris</i> (September 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of a continental responsible (referent) • Possible formation of a team (before September 2022)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment in Continental Assemblies (<i>process to be decided by the International Reunions of Episcopal Conferences</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Assemblies of Specialists 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of the final document (before March 2023)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of the document to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops (March 2023)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of the Second <i>Instrumentum laboris</i> (June 2023) 	

PHASE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH
October 2023

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops
(October 2023) |
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N. 210521b

Friday 21.05.2021

Note of the Synod of Bishops

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

“For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission”

Pope Francis, on the 24 April 2021, approved a new synodal programme for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Initially the Synod, “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission,” was hoped to commence in the month of October 2022. The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops has proposed new method for the journey toward the Synod.

This path toward the celebration of the Synod comprises of three phases, between October 2021 and October 2023, a diocesan phase and a continental phase that will give life to

two different Instrumentum Laboris, and finally a conclusive phase at the level of the Universal Church.

The Synod of Bishops is the dynamic point of convergence that calls for mutual listening to the Holy Spirit at every level of the Church’s life(cf.Address of His Holiness, Pope Francis, Ceremony Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015).The articulation of the different phases of the synodal process will help to make possible a true listening to the People of God to ensure the participation of all in the synodal process. It is not just an event, but also a process that involves in synergy the People of God, the College of Bishops and the Bishop of Rome, each according to their proper function.

The journey toward the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will follow the following path.

- Opening of the Synod (October 2021)

The opening of the Synod will take place in the Vatican and in every diocese. The Holy Father in the Vatican will inaugurate this synodal path: 9-10th October. Under the guidance of the local bishop, each diocese will open with the same celebration on Sunday 17th October.

- Diocesan Phase (October 2021 – April 2022)

The objective of this phase is to consult the People of God

(cf. *Episcopalis Communio*, 5,2) so that the synodal process is carried out through listening to all of the baptised, who are the subject of the *sensus fidei* – infallible – *in credendo*.

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will send a Preparatory Document, accompanied by a Questionnaire and a Vademecum with proposals for consultation in each local church.

The Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the Union of Superiors General - International Union Superiors General (USG - UISG) and other Unions and Federations of Consecrated life, international lay movements, and University/Faculties of Theology will also receive this Document.

Dioceses (local churches) and Episcopal Conferences or other corresponding bodies

Each bishop will appoint a diocesan contact person (and eventually a team) for the synodal consultation; they shall be a point of reference and link with the Episcopal Conference. They will accompany all the stages of the consultation process in the local church. (*Before October 2021*)

Each Episcopal Conference will also appoint a contact person (and eventually a team) responsible for liaising with both diocesan officials and with the General Secretariat for the

Synod of Bishops. (*Before October 2021*)

Dioceses

Consultation in the particular Churches will include those groups of participation as envisioned in *Episcopalis Communio*, without excluding other modalities deemed appropriate for the consultation to be real and effective (cf. *Episcopalis Communio*, 6).

Consultation with the People of God in each particular Church will conclude with a pre-synodal meeting, which will be the culmination of diocesan discernment.

After the conclusion of the diocesan phase, each particular Church will submit their contributions to their Episcopal Conference on a date determined by the Episcopal Conference itself. The Eastern Churches will submit their contributions to their corresponding bodies.

Episcopal Conferences or corresponding bodies

A period of discernment will begin for bishops gathered in an assembly (Episcopal Conference). They will listen to what the Spirit has inspired in the churches entrusted to them.

Participants in the drafting process of the synthesis include the contact person of the Episcopal Conference with regard to the synodal process and their team, as well as those

representatives elected to participate in the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, following their ratification by the Holy Father.

This synthesis will be sent to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops along with the contributions of each of the local churches. *(Before April 2022)*

Other contributions

The Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the Universities/Faculties of Theology, the Union of Superiors General/International Union Superiors General (USG/UIIG) and other Unions and Federations of Consecrated life, and international lay movements, shall also provide their own contributions to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. *(Before April 2022)*

General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will proceed with the drafting of the first *Instrumentum Laboris*. *(Before September of 2022)*

- Continental Phase (September 2022 – March 2023)

The purpose of this phase is to promote dialogue at the continental level about the text of the first *Instrumentum Laboris* and deepen discernment within the specific cultural

context of each continent.

General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will publish and release the first *Instrumentum Laboris*. *(September of 2022)*

International Reunions of Episcopal Conferences

Each International Reunion of Episcopal Conferences will also appoint a contact person to liaise with both the Episcopal Conferences and the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. *(Before September 2022)*

Pre-synodal discernment in the continental Assemblies. The criteria for the participation of the residential bishops and other members of the People of God is to be established.

The Assemblies will conclude with the drafting of a final document to be sent to the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops. *(March 2023)*

General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will proceed to draft the second *Instrumentum Laboris*. *(Before June 2023)*

- Universal Church Phase (October 2023)

The General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops will send

the second *Instrumentum Laboris* to the participants of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

Celebration of the Synod of Bishops will take place in Rome according to the norms established in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*.(October 2023)

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