



SECRETARIA GENERALIS
SYNODI

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.

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TO ALL BISHOPS

(with 4 annexes)



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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 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



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Annexes:

- 1 - BENEDICTIO IN FINE MISSÆ - DOMINICA XXVI "PER ANNUM"
(official text of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments)
- 2 - Blessing translation proposal
- 3 - Intercessions for weekdays
- 4 - Intercessions for feastdays - Sundays XXV and XXVI of Ordinary Time

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
BLESSING AT THE END OF MASS

The following blessing may be used *ad libitum* by the priest.

The priest himself says the invitation:

Brothers and sisters, Jesus promised to be present in the midst of his disciples gathered in his name. In the coming days at Rome, Pope Francis will open the first session of the Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Invoking the blessing of the Lord, we lift our minds to God that, by the stirring of the Holy Spirit, he may strengthen our communion, lead us to all truth, and enlighten the participants of the Synodal Assembly without ceasing.

Then the dismissal takes place. The Priest, facing the people and extending his hands, says:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply:

And with your spirit.

The Deacon or, in his absence, the Priest himself, says the invitation: Bow down for the blessing. Then the Priest, with hands extended over the people, says the blessing, with all responding: Amen.

May our God and Father,
who in many and various ways
spoke to our fathers through the prophets,
direct you and the whole Church
in fidelity to his word and in discernment of his will.

R. Amen.

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

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit lead you all,
and especially the Synodal Assembly,
to perceive the signs of the times,
so that, adhering to the will of God in all things,
you may bear the abundant fruit of unity
by promoting the life of the Church and witnessing to the Gospel.

R. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.
R. Amen.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER - INTERCESSIONS

FOR SUNDAY MASS

For the XXV and XXVI Sundays of Ordinary Time (A) which precede the opening of the Synod Assembly, we propose several intentions for Universal Prayer:

For the Church, on the eve of a new phase in the synodal journey, that the presence of the Gospel, alive and at work in her, may make her like the vineyard in the parable, a vital place where all men and women who seek meaning in their life find a place, a word, and a breath of hope, we pray:

For the bishops and all the participants in the Synodal Assembly, that proposals may spring forth from their listening to the Holy Spirit, so that the entire People of God, in a dynamism of communion, may feel that they are truly participating in the life of the Church and be a living and attractive witness to the newness of the Gospel in the world, we pray:

For theologians: may the gifts of wisdom and revelation accompany their contribution to the work of the Synodal Assembly, so that the gift of faith may become life in all God's people, we pray:

For young people, seekers of truth and authentic witness, concreteness and spirituality; that, as a result of the synodal journey, they may feel increasingly involved in the Church's life and mission in the midst of the challenges of today's world, giving to so many, with the enthusiasm of their age, the hope that springs from an encounter with Jesus, we pray:

For us gathered here in communion with Christian communities throughout the world: that by tasting the goodness of the Lord that comes to each one in the body and blood of Jesus, we may receive from him a fresh view of our neighbor and be made witnesses to generosity in the world in which we live, we pray:

UNIVERSAL PRAYER - INTERCESSIONS
FOR A WEEKDAY

These sample petitions may be used on a weekday either as Prayers of the Faithful at Mass 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 make all things new!**

Come, Holy Spirit, soul of the Church: unite and make fruitful the struggle, hope, and desire of all involved in the Synodal Assembly, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, gentle Breath of God, who in Jesus revive the dwindling flame and restore vigor to the bruised reed, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, Creator Spirit, who restore dry bones, gather the lost, and bring diverse peoples into conversation, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, burning Fire of God, who purify every vain thought, burn and transform every sadness into the joy of new birth, let us pray to the Lord:

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, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, God's Forgiveness, and convert us to your ways which reconcile us for a new fellowship, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, unapproachable Wisdom, and fill us with your synodal gifts, let us pray to the Lord:

Come, unfailing Hope of the Church, and stir up dreams and desires according to the heart of God which seem impossible to the human eye, let us pray to the Lord: