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Press Release

A Church alive and on the move

Work of the group of theologians concluded

Vatican, June 14, 2024

"The Holy People of God has been set in motion for mission thanks to the synodal experience. In the reports there were enthusiastic and creative responses offered as well as some with resistance and concern. Most reports, however, show the joy of the journey that has given new life to many local communities and also provoked significant changes on their way of living and being Church. The seeds of the Synodal Church are already sprouting!" said **Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J.**, General Rapporteur of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, at the conclusion of the work of the group of theologians who, from June 4 to 14, worked on the reports that reached the General Secretariat of the Synod in preparation for the Second Session of the XVI Assembly (Oct. 2-27, 2024).

The group of theologians (women and men, bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, and lay people) from different continents worked on the 107 reports from the Bishops' Conferences and from the Eastern Catholic Churches, the contribution of the USG-UISG (the International Union of Major Superiors and the International Union of Superiors General, respectively), and the more than 175 submissions, from international realities, university faculties, associations of the faithful or of individual communities and persons. Another significant source of reflection was the reports presented by the parish priests at the three-day working session of the [Parish Priests for the Synod](#) meeting.

These reports are the fruit of the work that local churches have done since the [Synthesis Report](#) of the First Session of the 16th Assembly. They show a Church that is alive and on the move. Among the themes most frequently mentioned are: formation for synodality, the functioning of participatory bodies, the role of women, young people, attention to the poor, inculturation, transparency and a culture of accountability on the part of those who assume ministry in the Church, but also catechesis and Christian initiation, collaboration among churches, the figure of the bishop, etc..... These reports are also rich in testimonies.

"The reports often recount the experience of people who have made a real personal conversion. Others, however, are of people who continue to experience confusion, worry or anxiety. In particular, there is a fear that what is sent is not taken seriously or that ideologies and lobbies of the faithful may exploit the synodal path to impose their own agenda," says **Cardinal Mario Grech**, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod. Continuing, he said, "That is why it is good to remember that the October Assembly is not about this or that issue, but about synodality, about how to be a missionary Church on the way. All the theological issues and pastoral proposals for changes have this purpose. The Assembly will first and foremost be a time when each participant, placing one's self within a journey that began in 2021 and bringing the 'voice' of the people of God from where each one comes, will invoke the help of the Holy Spirit and that of his brothers and sisters to discern God's will for His Church, and not an opportunity to impose one's own vision of Church."

The process of drafting the *Instrumentum Laboris* will continue with other stages: at this moment, which has seen the articulation of the material received by this group of theologians, the [Ordinary Council](#) will carry out an initial discernment of what has been drafted. This will be followed by the stages of drafting the

actual document and a system of wide-ranging consultation until the Ordinary Council approves the document to be submitted to the Holy Father for final approval.

"The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Second Session of the XVI Assembly will look different from the previous one. If for the First Session it was important to bring out the *wide-ranging* themes, to be addressed, the working document for the October session intends instead to highlight some knots to be unraveled in order to answer the question, *How to be a synodal Church in mission*, taking in the path made so far and proposing theologically grounded arguments together with some concrete proposals to help the discernment entrusted to the members of the assembly," says **Msgr. Riccardo Battocchio**, Special Secretary of the XVI Assembly.

The work, held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Synod, was led by the two Special Secretaries of the XVI Assembly, Msgr. Riccardo Battocchio and Fr. Giacomo Costa S.J., and was attended by Cardinal Mario Grech and Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J.

List of participants

Cardinal Mario **GRECH**, *Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod*

Cardinal Jean-Claude **HOLLERICH S.J.**, *General Rapporteur of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*

H.E. Msgr. Luis **MARÍN DE SAN MARTÍN O.S.A.**, *Undersecretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod*

Sr Nathalie **BECQUART, X.M.C.J.**, *Undersecretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod*

Mgr Riccardo **BATTOCCHIO**, *Special Secretary of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*

Father Giacomo **COSTA S.J.**, *Special Secretary of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*

Theologians Experts (in alphabetical order and with indication of the country of origin)

- Rev. Father Paul **BÉRÉ, S.J.**, *Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Biblical Hermeneutics at the Pontifical Biblical Institute - Burkina Faso*
- Rev. Prof. Giuseppe **BONFRATE**, *Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Director of the Alberto Hurtado Centre for Faith and Culture - Italy*
- Rev. Prof. Pasquale **BUA**, *Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University - Italy*
- Rev. Sr. Maria **CIMPERMAN, R.S.C.J.**, *Professor of Moral Theology, Social Ethics and Consecrated Life at the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago - UISG Synodality Coordinator - USA*
- H.E. Msgr. Timothy John **COSTELLOE, S.D.B.**, *Archbishop of Perth and Consultor of the General Secretariat of the Synod - Australia*
- Rev. Prof. Clarence Sandanaraj **DAVEDASSAN**, *Professor of Moral Theology at the Alphonsian Academy in Rome - Malaysia*
- Dr. Paolo **FOGLIZZO**, *Expert at the Synod and Editor of the magazine Aggiornamenti Sociali - Italy*
- Rev. Gloria Liliana **FRANCO ECHEVERRI, O.D.N.**, *President of the Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosos (C.L.A.R.) - Colombia*
- Rev. Prof. Carlos Maria **GALLI**, *Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Universidad Católica Argentina - Argentina*
- Prof. Rafael **LUCIANI**, *Professor of Ecclesiology and Latin-American Theology at the Andrés Bello Catholic University - Venezuela*
- H.E. Msgr. Lúcio Andrice **MUANDULA**, *Bishop of Xai-Xai, Member of the Preparatory Commission - Mozambique*
- Rev. Sr. José **NGALULA, R.S.A.**, *Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Catholic University of Congo and the Jean XXIII Major Seminary of Kinshasa - Congo (Democratic Republic of the)*
- H.E. Mgr. Roberto **REPOLE**, *Archbishop of Turin - Italy*

- Rev. Prof. Gilles **ROUTHIER**, *Professor of Ecclesiology and Practical Theology at the University of Laval (Quebec) - Canada*
- Prof. Anna **ROWLANDS**, *Professor of Social Doctrine of the Church at Durham University - United Kingdom*
- Rev. Prof. Ormond **RUSH**, *Associate Professor of Theology at the Australian Catholic University - Australia*
- Prof. Péter **SZABÓ**, *Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Budapest - Hungary*
- Rev. Prof. Dario **VITALI**, *Professor of Ecclesiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University and Consultant of the General Secretariat of the Synod - Italy*
- Prof. Myriam **WIJLENS**, *Professor of Canon Law at the University of Erfurt (Germany) - The Netherlands*
- Rev. Prof. Felix **WILFRED**, *Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religious Thought at the Madras State University - India*