



SECRETARIA GENERALIS  
SYNODI



DIOCESI DI  
ROMA



XVI General Ordinary  
Assembly of the  
Synod of Bishops

[Original text: Italian]

## **Penitential Celebration** **St. Peter's Basilica -- October 1, 2024 at 6 PM**

A Church that wants to walk together must be continually reconciled. Forgiveness constitutes the Church's fundamental fulfilment because it synthesises its nature and mission. It would, however, be simplistic to only think of the Church as the administrator and dispenser of sacramental forgiveness. Pope Francis has taught us that it is also necessary that the Church ask for forgiveness by calling out sins by name, feeling pain and even shame, because we are all sinners in need of mercy: of the mercy given by the God who never tires of loving and forgiving. Forgiveness, then, is like a resurrection, permitting those who have fallen to stand again and those who fear they have compromised everything to begin again. To confess one's sins is the condition for a new beginning.

At the end of the spiritual retreat (30 September - 1 October) for all participants in the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, the Penitential Liturgy is intended to direct the work of the Synod towards the beginning of a new way of being Church.

In St. Peter's Basilica, the penitential celebration, presided over by Pope Francis, will include time to listen to three testimonies of persons who have suffered sin: the sin of abuse; the sin of war; the sin of indifference to the drama present in the growing phenomenon of migrations all over the world.

Subsequently, the confession of a number of sins will take place. The aim is not to denounce the sin of others, but to acknowledge oneself as a member of those who, by omission or action, become the cause of suffering and responsible for the evil inflicted on the innocent and defenceless. Whoever expresses the request for forgiveness will do so in the name of all the baptised. In particular, they will confess the:

- Sin against peace
- Sin against creation, against indigenous populations, against migrants
- Sin of abuse
- Sin against women, family, youth
- Sin of using doctrine as stones to be hurled
- Sin against poverty
- Sin against synodality / lack of listening, communion, and participation of all

At the end of this confession of sins, the Holy Father will address, on behalf of all the faithful, the request for forgiveness to God and to the sisters and brothers of all humanity.

The penitential celebration, jointly organised by the General Secretariat of the Synod and the Diocese of Rome in collaboration with the Union of Major Superiors (USG) and the International Union of Major Superiors (UISG), is open to all, especially young people, and can be followed on the Vatican Media, which broadcast it live.

The liturgy directs the Church's inner gaze to the faces of new generations. Indeed, it will be the young people present in the Basilica who will receive the sign that the future of the Church is theirs, and that the request for forgiveness is the first step of a faith-filled and missionary credibility that must be re-established.