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Press Release: First Meeting of the 15th Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops (6 to 7 February 2020)

In 6 and 7 February 2020, the first meeting of the 15th Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops was held, to suggest to the Holy Father some possible themes to examine in the 16th Ordinary General Assembly, and to consider how to face other issues such as the work carried out by the General Secretariat after the Synod on youth in 2018 and the resonance of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Secretary General made it known that, following the appointment of Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle as prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Coutts, archbishop of Karachi, Pakistan, entered as a new member of the Ordinary Council, as the Synod Father from Asia who received the most votes.

The work began with an intervention from the Secretary General, His Eminence Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, who presented the results of the consultation carried out by the General Secretariat on the themes for the next Ordinary General Assembly, involving during the year 2019 the Episcopal Conferences, the Synods of the *sui iuris* Oriental Catholic Churches, the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General. After the presentation by the Secretary General, a rich debate took place both in the plenary session and in the various language groups.

The plenary session in the afternoon of Thursday 6 February was chaired by the Holy Father, to whom a range of three possible themes was presented, which he accepted with a view to a final decision on the synod topic.

During the debate of the same afternoon, the urgent need to express solidarity with brothers and sisters involved in the drama of forced migration also emerged.

The process towards the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was also discussed, and in this regard, the Holy Father, having heard the opinion of the General Secretariat and the Ordinary Council, decided to call the Assembly for autumn 2022, so as to ensure greater involvement of the whole Church in the preparation and celebration of the next Ordinary Synod.

During the morning of Friday 7 February, the work began with the intervention of His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, invited to illustrate the post-synodal activities that the Youth Section is carrying out to urge the implementation of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*.

During an exchange of opinions on the upcoming activities of the Ordinary Council, the Secretary General thanked the members for their contributions.
