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## Letter of the Holy Father to His Eminence Cardinal Mario Grech

The following is the Letter sent by the Holy Father Francis to His Eminence Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the General Secretariat of the Synod:

Letter of the Holy Father

To His Reverend Eminence Cardinal MARIO GRECH

Secretary General
of the General Secretariat of the Synod

Dear Brother,
Cardinal Mario Grech,

The *Synthesis Report* of the First Session of the Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, approved on 28 October 2023, enumerates many important theological issues, all of which are to varying degrees related to the synodal renewal of the Church and not without juridical and pastoral repercussions.

These issues, by their very nature, require in-depth study. As it will not be possible to carry out this study in the time of the Second Session (2-27 October 2024), I am arranging for them to be assigned to specific Study Groups, so that they may be properly examined. This will be one of the fruits of the Synod process launched on 9 October 2021.

In the spirit of the *Chirograph* signed by me on 16 February, it is the task of the General Secretariat of the Synod, by joint agreement with the competent Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, to constitute these Groups, calling Pastors and Experts from all Continents to take part in them, and taking into consideration not only existing studies, but also the most relevant current experiences in the People of God gathered in the local

Churches. It is important that the aforementioned Study Groups work according to an authentically synodal method, of which I ask you to be the guarantor.

This will enable the Assembly, in its Second Session, to focus more easily on the general theme that I assigned to it at the time, and which can now be summarized in the question: "*How* to be a synodal Church in mission?".

The Study Groups will offer an initial account of their activity on the occasion of the Second Session and, if possible, will conclude their mandate by the month of June 2025.

After giving all matters due consideration, I direct that the Groups in question address the topics listed below in summary form, in the light of the contents of the *Synthesis Report* (RdS):

1.Some aspects of the relationship between the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Latin Church. (SR 6)

2.Listening to the Cry of the Poor (SR 4 and 16)

3.The mission in the digital environment. (SR 17

4.The revision of the*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*in a missionary synodal perspective. (SR 11)

5.Some theological and canonical matters regarding specific ministerial forms. (SR 8 and 9)

6.The revision, in a synodal missionary perspective, of the documents touching on the relationship between Bishops, consecrated life, and ecclesial associations. (SR 10)

7.Some aspects of the person and ministry of the Bishop (criteria for selecting candidates to Episcopacy, judicial function of the Bishops, nature and course of*ad limina Apostolorum*visits) from a missionary synodal perspective. (SR 12 and 13)

8.The role of Papal Representatives in a missionary synodal perspective. (SR 13)

9.Theological criteria and synodal methodologies for shared discernment of controversial doctrinal, pastoral, and ethical issues. (SR 15)

10.The reception of the fruits of the ecumenical journey in ecclesial practices. (SR 7)

It will be the task of the General Secretariat of the Synod to prepare the outline of the work to specify the mandate of the groups in the light of my indications.

In thanking You for the work accomplished thus far, I bless and accompany You, and all those who generously collaborate in this ongoing journey, with my prayers.

Francis

From the Vatican, 22 February 2024