

The Highlights of the Synthesis Report

The '41-page Synthesis', which was voted at the First Session of the General Assembly, is divided into three parts, which correspond to the three tags of the Synod: **'Communion, Mission, Participation.'**

Each Chapter is divided into three sections, viz., (a) **Convergences** (areas of thought and practice that are agreed upon by all); (b) **Matters for Consideration** (areas that need further clarification and understanding), and (c) **Proposals** (the prospective points for implementation at the Local Churches, Episcopal Conferences, Intercontinental Assemblies and the Universal Church). The Matters for Consideration and the Proposals open space for further discussion and discernment.

Part One (Chapters 1-7), 'The Face of the Synodal Church'

Part One (Chapters 1-7), titled 'The Face of the Synodal Church,' defines the identity of the synodal church. Being part of the synodal church is an experience and to understand it one must live it. The most substantial agreement emerged is: "synodality represents the future of the Church". It is to be understood as Christians walking in communion with the Trinity towards the Kingdom of God with the whole humanity. If there is a lack of spiritual depth then synodality remains only cosmetic. Church must become a conversation within herself and with the world.

Another point of convergence was that there is a cry for love from those in poverty. Respect, acceptance and recognition for the poor is implicit in Christological faith (Jesus had a preferential option for the poor). By poor we mean all those who do not have the things they need to lead a dignified life. Pg.10.

Matters for Consideration

More clarifications are sought on the relationship of synodality with collegiality. Spiritual energy through "Lectio Divina".

Proposals:

Involvement of the clergy must be more active, the seeming resistance must be overcome. An intercontinental commission of theological and canonical experts is

proposed. There should be training in the process of ecclesial discernment in each local church.

The Church's social doctrine is a too little known resource and must be disseminated and ensure through practice that its inspiration is put into action.

In the ecumenical front, a common celebration of the anniversary of the Council of Nicaea (325) is proposed in 2025. Also a keen desire was expressed to come to a common date for the feast of Easter (pg.16). (Eastern Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Coptic, Anglican)

Part Two (Chapters 8-13), 'All Disciples, All Missionaries'

In Part Two (Chapters 8-13), 'All Disciples, All Missionaries,' all the baptised are called disciples and missionaries. This section underscores the mission of all the faithful, deacons, priests, women, bishops of the Local Churches and the Bishop of Rome. Everyone is of the opinion that family is the pillar of every Christian community.

Women are the first missionaries of the faith in the families. When their dignity is undermined in the Church, the credibility of our proclamation is weakened in the world.

Matters for Consideration

Lay faithful must become part of the missionary dynamism of the synodal Church.

Proposals:

Formulate ministries according to the needs of the local churches, with the particular involvement of the young.

Ensure substantial participation of women in the all the decision-making processes and assume roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry. Appropriate formation to be given to women to enable them to be judges in canonical processes.

A regular audit of how priests and deacons are carrying out roles of responsibility in the exercise of their ministry is proposed pg.24. Same is proposed for the bishops (pg.25). A culture of accountability.

Part Three (Chapters 14-20), ‘Weaving Bonds, Building Communities

Part Three (Chapters 14-20), ‘Weaving Bonds, Building Communities,’ focuses on the joint formation of all the people of God, mission in digital environment, strengthening the structures of participation.

Participation requires formation: theological, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, engagement as ‘digital missionaries’, care for our ‘common home’, ‘Conversation in the Spirit’, consensus building, etc. with a special focus on catechetical formation of the young (pg.29)

The Church encountered many people and groups along the synodal process asking to be listened to and accompanied. Listening with attention and sensitivity to the voices of victims and survivors of all kinds of abuse by persons with Church appointments (pg.32).

Proposals:

Digital mission especially for the ‘digital natives’.

Ensure participation and just representation in the Church life by legislating for the obligatory nature of Pastoral Councils.

An evaluation of the synodal processes at all levels of the Church be done.

Conclusion

The expressions that draw our attention are: ‘synodal culture,’ ‘formation for synodality,’ ‘joint formation of the clergy, the religious and the lay faithful,’ ‘conversation in the spirit at all levels,’ ‘pastoral structures to be re-organised,’ ‘canonical and theological revisit to the structures,’ ‘missionary dynamism,’ ‘charismatic sign,’ ‘women as partners in mission,’ ‘regular audit of priests and deacons,’ ‘review of the selection of the candidates for the episcopate,’ ‘reviewing the performance of the bishops,’ ‘grouping of churches’ and ‘evangelical solidarity.’

The only word that revolves around synodality is **mission: mission as evangelization of the joy of the gospel.**