

Accompanying the Implementation Phase of the Synod

Letter to the Bishops and the People of God of the whole world

Vatican, 15 March 2025

The General Secretariat of the Synod has sent to all Bishops and Eparchs, and through them, to the whole “Holy People of God” entrusted to their care, a ***Letter on the accompaniment process of the implementation phase of the Synod*** «For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission».

This process of accompaniment and evaluation of the implementation phase, coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Synod, was approved by **Pope Francis**. The Holy Father requested its dissemination to the local Churches and groupings of Churches.

Several significant moments for evaluating the progress made in the implementation phase will conclude in 2028 with an **ecclesial Assembly** in Rome.

In addition to the *Letter*, an **[interview](#)** given by **Cardinal Mario Grech**, General Secretary of the Synod, to VaticanNews, is available.

Letter on the Accompaniment Process of the Implementation Phase of the Synod (Vatican, 15 March 2025)

To the Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches
To all Bishops and Eparchs
To the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences

To the Presidents of the International Meetings of Episcopal Conferences

Your Beatitude, Eminence, Excellency,
Dear Brother in Christ,

in a spirit of communion and co-responsibility, I write to you and to the holy People of God entrusted to your care regarding the implementation phase of the Synod «*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*». The Holy Father hopes that this phase, as outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio* (n. 7, arts. 19-21), receives particular attention so that synodality is increasingly understood and lived as an essential dimension of the ordinary life of local Churches and the entire Church.

On 11 March, the Holy Father definitively approved the start of a process of accompaniment and evaluation of the implementation phase by the General Secretariat of the Synod. This process calls upon Dioceses and Eparchies, Episcopal Conferences, and the hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches, as well as their continental groupings. They will be responsible for engaging institutes of consecrated life, societies of apostolic life, lay associations, ecclesial movements, and new communities present in their territories. It will ultimately culminate in the celebration of an ecclesial assembly in the Vatican in October 2028. For now, therefore, a new Synod will not be convened; instead, the focus will be on consolidating the path taken so far.

In the Accompanying Note to the *Final Document* of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, the Holy Father had already specified that it «is part of the ordinary magisterium of the Successor of Peter» and and, as such, must be received accordingly. He went on to explain that it is not strictly normative but nonetheless calls on the Churches to make consistent choices. In particular, «the local Churches and groupings of Churches are now called upon to implement, in their different contexts, the authoritative proposals contained in the Document through the processes of discernment and decision-making provided for by law and by the Document itself».

In light of these indications, therefore, the implementation phase of the Synod should be understood not as merely the “application” of directives from above, but rather as a process of “reception” of the orientations expressed in the *Final Document*, adapted appropriately to local cultures and the needs of

communities. At the same time, it is essential to move forward together as the whole Church, harmonizing this reception across different ecclesial contexts. This is the reason for the process of accompaniment and evaluation, which in no way diminishes the responsibility of each Church.

In line with the indications of the *Final Document*, the aim is to concretely realize the perspective of the exchange of gifts between Churches and within the whole Church concrete (cf. nn. 120-121). Along the way, everyone will be able to benefit from the richness and creativity of the paths taken by local Churches, gathering the fruits in their territorial groupings (Provinces, Episcopal Conferences, International Meetings of Episcopal Conferences, etc.). The process will also be an opportunity to evaluate together the choices made at the local level and recognize the progress made in terms of synodality (cf. n. 9). Thanks to this process, the Holy Father will be able to listen to and confirm the orientations deemed valid for the whole Church (cf. nn. 12 and 131). Finally, this process provides the framework within which to place the many and diverse initiatives for implementing the orientations of the Synod, particularly the results of the work of the Study Groups and the contributions of the Canonical Commission.

It is of fundamental importance to ensure that the implementation phase serves as an opportunity to re-engage the people who have contributed and to present the fruits gathered from listening to all the Churches and the discernment of the Pastors in the Synodal Assembly: thus, the dialogue already initiated in the listening phase will continue. The process will rely on the work of synodal teams composed of priests, deacons, consecrated men and women, laymen and laywomen, accompanied by their bishop: these are fundamental tools for accompanying the ordinary synodal life of local Churches. For this reason, existing teams should be valued and possibly renewed, idle teams should be reactivated and appropriately integrated. This process will also offer Dioceses that have invested less in the synodal path an opportunity to recover the steps not yet taken and to form their own synodal teams. I invite you to communicate to the Secretariat of the Synod the composition and references of the synodal team of your Diocese or Eparchy, using the form available in the attachment.

In this context, the announcement of the Jubilee of synodal teams and participatory bodies to be held on 24-26 October 2025, takes on particular significance. thus placing the commitment to building a Church that is increasingly synodal within the horizon of the hope that does not disappoint,

which we celebrate in the Jubilee.

The journey that will lead the whole Church to the celebration of the ecclesial assembly in October 2028 will be structured in such a way as to offer adequate and sustainable times for the implementation of the Synod's indications, while also providing for some significant moments of evaluation:

- **March 2025:** announcement of the accompaniment and evaluation process;
- **May 2025:** publication of the Support Document for the implementation phase, with guidelines for its conduct;
- **June 2025 – December 2026:** implementation paths in local Churches and their groupings;
- **24-26 October 2025:** Jubilee of synodal teams and participatory bodies;
- **first half of 2027:** evaluation Assemblies in Dioceses and Eparchies;
- **second half of 2027:** evaluation Assemblies in national and international Episcopal Conferences, Eastern hierarchical structures, and other groupings of Churches;
- **first half of 2028:** continental evaluation Assemblies;
- **June 2028:** publication of the *Instrumentum laboris* for the works of the ecclesial Assembly in October 2028;
- **October 2028:** celebration of the ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.

As of now, the General Secretariat of the Synod is committed to accompanying and supporting the Churches on this journey.

Your Beatitude, Eminence, Excellency,

By the end of May, we will send further communications to the Churches with more details regarding the methodology and operational procedures of the journey.

Without the impetus of diocesan and eparchial bishops, a process like the one outlined here would not even be imaginable. As of now, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, your collaborators, and your synodal team for your commitment to advancing a journey that is particularly close to the Holy Father's heart, for whose health we are all praying together in these weeks.

I greet you fraternally in the Lord, wishing you and the Church of which you are Pastor a fruitful journey toward the upcoming Easter

Card. Mario Grech *General Secretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod*

