



LAURA JAMES

Enlarge the space of your tent ...

Isaiah 54:2

SYNOD WORKING DOCUMENT

The latest working for the Synod was launched during a press conference in Rome on 27 October. This is the document that will be used in the continental phase of the Synod in all seven continents.

The document was written by a team of lay and clerical experts who met for around two weeks in Frascati at the end of September. Austen Ivereigh was one of the experts, he describes some of the process:

The 112 local church reports, were each a synthesis of diocesan processes and were the main material we worked on. But we also kept in view the reports that the synod secretariat had already sifted through: syntheses from superiors of religious orders across the world; a single submission from 150 associations of lay faithful; reports from 17 dicasteries of the Roman curia; and a report compiled by 'influencers' in the digital world whose breakthrough online listening exercise drew in over 100,000 people. Finally we heard a presentation on the submissions from more than 1,000 individual or groups who had chosen to write directly to the secretariat.

CONVERGENT RESPONSES

Cardinal Mario Grech said that the writing group reading the syntheses from national churches were surprised

by *"the singular convergence on many points of convergence on many points of contribution that came from very different ecclesial and cultural contexts."*

When asked during the press conference if the writing group were favouring any particular agenda, Cardinal Grech replied: *"We aren't pushing any agenda; it was our responsibility to present to the people of God, to give back to them what was given to us."*

SYNOD WORKING DOCUMENT IS NOW AVAILABLE



<https://www.synod.va/en/highlights/working-document-for-the-continental-stage.html>

ENLARGE THE SPACE OF YOUR TENT ...

spread out your tent cloths unsparingly, lengthen your ropes and make firm your pegs.

Isaiah 54:2

The working document notes: *It is to a people living the experience of exile that the prophet addresses words that help us today to focus on what the Lord is calling us to through the experience of lived synodality.*

TWO SPIRITUAL TEMPTATIONS

The document speaks of two spiritual temptations facing the Church in responding to diversity and the temptations it generates.

The first is to remain trapped in conflict, such that our horizons shrink and we lose our sense of the whole, and fracture into sub-identities. It is an experience of Babel and not Pentecost, well recognisable in many features of our world. The second is to become spiritually detached and disinterested in the tensions involved, continuing to go our own way without involving those close to us on the journey, n.4

SOME GLOBAL VOICES FROM THE DOCUMENT

ZIMBABWE

Largely, what emerges from the fruits, seeds and weeds of synodality are voices that dream of a Church of credible witnesses, a Church that is inclusive, open and welcoming Family of God.

CANADA

Our current synod experience has awakened in the lay faithful the idea of, and a desire to, get involved with the life of the Church, in its engagement with the world today, and in its pastoral work on the ground.

HAITI

Despite the continuous cases of kidnapping and violence recorded, the reports of the Dioceses express the joy of those who were able to actively participate in this first phase of the Synod.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

This synodal experience has been one of the most rewarding that many have been able to experience in their Christian lives. From the first moment the work of the Synod began to the point where we are now, there is great enthusiasm among the People of God.

BANGLADESH

While sharing the fundamental question: 'How is this journeying together happening today in your particular Church?' it was noted that people could realise the true nature of the Church and in that light, they were able to see the situation of their Particular Church.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

There is a strong mobilisation of the People of God, the joy of coming together, of walking together and of speaking freely. Some Christians who felt hurt and who had distanced.

LATVIA

Meetings in the spirit of the synodal method, in which all members of the congregation or community can openly and honestly express their opinion, as well as meetings with various groups outside the Church, should continue. This kind of cooperation should become one of the 'unwritten laws' of the Church culture, so as to foster rapprochement between Church members and groups in society, thus creating a readiness of people for deeper dialogue.

CHILE

In this process there was also resistance, lack of participation, communities that did not join. This may have been partly due to the novelty of the challenge, since many communities are not accustomed to this way of living the Church. It was also due to the fact that some leaders and pastors did not assume the animating and guiding role that corresponded to them.

AUSTRALIA

There was ongoing reference to the impact of the clergy sexual abuse crisis and the Church's response [...]. For many, the aftermath of this is still a powerful, unresolved issue. There was a strong urgency to acknowledge the horror and damage, and to strengthen efforts to safeguard the vulnerable, repair damage to the moral authority of the Church and rebuild trust. Some Dioceses reported that participants wished for them publicly to acknowledge and atone for past abuses

RWANDA

Concerning the tragedy of the genocide against the Tutsi that has so divided the Rwandan people, one should better deepen the theme of communion with a view to an authentic healing of the collective memory. This Synod has given us a better understanding that the pastoral of unity and reconciliation must continue to be a priority

JAPAN

There was a growing understanding that it is important for all who have received the blessing of baptism to walk together, sharing and discerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit who calls them. There was a deep realization that in the synodal Church walking together is the way to become a missionary Church .

PAKISTAN

People of God remarked on the uniqueness of speaking freely and being heard in organized conversations that were open-ended and attentive with guidance of the Holy Spirit. They spoke of how, after decades of church going, they had been asked to speak for first time.

