



Letter of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God

Dear sisters, dear brothers,

As the proceedings of the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops draw to a close, we want to thank God with all of you for the beautiful and enriching experience we have lived. We lived this blessed time in profound communion with all of you. We were supported by your prayers, bearing with you your expectations, your questions, as well as your fears. As Pope Francis requested two years ago, a long process of listening and discernment was initiated, open to all the People of God, no one being excluded, to “journey together” under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, missionary disciples engaged in the following of Jesus Christ.

The session in which we have been gathered in Rome since 30 September is an important phase of this process. In many ways it has been an unprecedented experience. For the first time, at Pope Francis’ invitation, men and women have been invited, in virtue of their baptism, to sit at the same table to take part, not only in the discussions, but also in the voting process of this Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Together, in the complementarity of our vocations, our charisms and our ministries, we have listened intensely to the Word of God and the experience of others. Using the conversation in the Spirit method, we have humbly shared the wealth and poverty of our communities from every continent, seeking to discern what the Holy Spirit wants to say to the Church today. We have thus also experienced the importance of fostering mutual exchanges between the Latin tradition and the traditions of Eastern Christianity. The participation of fraternal delegates from other Churches and Ecclesial Communities deeply enriched our discussions.

Our assembly took place in the context of a world in crisis, whose wounds and scandalous inequalities resonated painfully in our hearts, infusing our work with a particular gravity, especially since some of us come from countries where war rages. We prayed for the victims of deadly violence, without forgetting all those who have been forced by misery and corruption to take the dangerous road of migration. We assured our solidarity and commitment alongside the women and men all over the world who are working to build justice and peace.

At the invitation of the Holy Father, we made significant room for silence to foster mutual listening and a desire for communion in the Spirit among us. During the opening ecumenical vigil, we experienced how the thirst for unity increases in the silent contemplation