

## **Pope to Synod: the Holy Spirit is the protagonist**

*Pope Francis reminded the Synodal Assembly that the Holy Spirit is the gathering's protagonist, and offers his heartfelt thanks to all, as he addressed the closing session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod on Synodality*

### ***The Holy Spirit is the protagonist of this Synod...***

THE POPE offered this powerful reminder during the closing session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which took place Saturday in the Vatican, in his brief remarks.

The Holy Father began his remarks, in Spanish, thanking all those who have played a key role in the synodal gathering.

“I want to remind you that the protagonist of this Synod is the Holy Spirit, and so I suggest you take away with you the text of St Basil that was prepared for us by Father Davide Piras: keep meditating on it, it can help us.”

“I want to thank each and every one of you for your work,”

he said, adding,

“Cardinal Grech did not sleep at night, Cardinal Hollerich was ‘master of the novices’ Nathalie Becquart, Luis Marín de San Martín, Father Giacomo Costa, Father Riccardo Battocchio, Giuseppe Bonfrate, Sister Maria Grazia Angelini, Father Timothy Radcliffe who have shared their spiritual knowledge with us, and to the ‘hidden ones,’ all those who are here behind us, whom we do not see but who have made all this possible.”

“Thank you all from the bottom of my heart,” he said.

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Today, the Synod Assembly voted on the Synthesis report, and tomorrow this phase of the Synod will officially close with Holy Mass celebrated by Pope Francis.

The 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held in two moments, that is, in two sessions, spaced one year apart: the first from October 4 to 29, 2023, the second in October 2024.

Before praying together, and receiving the Holy Father’s blessing, Pope Francis concluded by offering his heartfelt thanks to all.

## Press conference

AT THE EVENING press conference that followed at the Holy See Press Office, Synod representatives gave an overview of the Synod experience.

**Cardinal Mario Grech**, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, remarked on how this Synod has created more spaces, as there was mutual listening and sharing of many people from all walks of life who opened their hearts to each other. He noted how this is a fruit of the Synod's work that will continue in the future, a Church that is reaching out to make sure nobody is excluded.

**Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ** Archbishop of Luxembourg and Synod General Rapporteur, then spoke about the transformation that took place as Synod participants got to know each other and hear each other's stories.

The sense of community and being disciples of Jesus became strong, looking at how the Lord would respond to the various situations discussed. He also described how the participants discovered a joy that they will take back home with them, with hearts full of hope.

### **Fr Giacomo Costa SJ**

Synod Secretary, recalled how the prayer for unity, said each day, reflected the beauty of what participants experienced—the Church and all its members being one in the Lord. He described how this is a gift for the entire Church and humanity, especially in view of a world marked by divisions and war. The gift of unity that they experienced, and richness of perspectives shared, show that it is possible for people of different cultures to gather together, discuss and be open to each other's experiences, a process that will bear much fruit.