



## APORTES PARA EL SINODO LUGARES

### ENGLISH

#### Particularly valid points worthy of inclusion in the Final Document

- In general the Section is very good, proposing and articulating instances and organisms that outline concrete prospects for the development of a Church “united in diversity”, of which synodality constitutes the architrave in terms of spirituality, mentality and structures. In this framework of particular importance are:

- the statement that “The variety of liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary traditions is the most evident demonstration of how much this plurality enriches and makes the Church beautiful. It is the communion of the Churches, each with its local concreteness, that manifests the communion of the Faithful in the one and only Church, avoiding its evaporation in an abstract and homogenizing universalism” (n. 80)

- the articulation of the Church as a “body of Churches” in “a) in the individual Churches as portions of the People of God, each entrusted to a Bishop; b) in the groupings of Churches, where the instances of communion are represented above all by hierarchical organisms; c) in the entire Church (Ecclesia tota), where the Church as a communion of Churches is expressed by the College of Bishops gathered around the Bishop of Rome in the bond of episcopal (cum Petro) and hierarchical (sub Petro) communion” (n. 88).

- the detailed description of the desirable developments of the Councils, both in their competences (“subjects of processes of ecclesial discernment and synodal decision-making processes and places of the practice of accountability and evaluation of those who hold roles of authority” – n. 91), as well as in their composition (n. 92) and in the need to make them obligatory (n. 93)

- the proposal to hold “ecclesial assemblies at all levels”, open to the “contribution of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of other religions present in the territory and of society” (n. 94), articulating them with the valorization of particular Councils (n. 99). However, it is necessary to abandon the distinction between churches and ‘ecclesial communities’, which is devaluing, and instead recognise the self-understanding of them

- the emphasis that “a synodal style allows us not to think that on every issue all the Churches must necessarily move at the same pace. On the contrary, differences in pace can be valued as an expression of legitimate diversity and as an opportunity for an exchange of gifts” (n. 95)

- the urgency of making explicit the “statute of Episcopal Conferences that conceives them as subjects of concrete attributions, including some authentic doctrinal authority” (n. 96), which should probably first of all concern the area of liturgy and ministries, followed by the proposal to “a) recognize Episcopal Conferences as ecclesial subjects endowed with doctrinal authority, assuming socio-cultural diversity within the framework of a multifaceted Church and favoring the valorization of liturgical, disciplinary,

theological and spiritual expressions appropriate to the different socio-cultural contexts; b) proceed to an evaluation of the lived experience of the functioning of the Episcopal Conferences and of the Eastern Hierarchical Structures, of the relations between the Episcopates and with the Holy See, in order to identify the concrete reforms to be implemented” (n. 97)

- the call to rethink the Petrine ministry “in the perspective of ‘healthy decentralization’” (n. 102) and in light of the dialogue with the other Churches (n. 107)

- the urge to “imagine authentically ecumenical synodal practices, up to forms of consultation and discernment on questions of shared and urgent interest” (n. 108)

### **Points that need to be discussed, deepened, corrected**

- If the understanding of the parish as a “community of communities” is positive (n. 89), a reflection on the synodality of and in the Church cannot ignore the experience of the basic ecclesial communities or small Christian communities, spread across all continents, and defined, for example by the General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, held in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968, as “initial cell of the ecclesial structure and center of evangelization” (Med 15,10). It would be necessary, in this sense, for these communities to see their status recognized, even at a canonical level.

- where continental ecclesial assemblies are mentioned (nos. 94 and 98), it is necessary to highlight the need to define their theological foundation, their canonical configuration (see Synthesis Report no. 19m), to avoid leaving their convocation to the mere will of the ecclesiastical authority, and their competences, also with respect to the Episcopal Conferences, as well as the possibility of convening ecclesial assemblies also at the level of the Church as a whole

- this also refers to the opportunity to define the canonical status, competences and doctrinal authority of the intermediate structures between the local Church and the Church as a whole, which group together on a continental or regional level Churches that are homogeneous in terms of cultural area and history, evaluating the usefulness of establishing Patriarchates or continental Episcopal Conferences as bodies at which level legitimate differences in discipline, liturgy, ministry, etc. can be expressed, and perhaps exercise a significant role in the appointment of bishops,

- with reference to no. 105, it is appropriate to insist explicitly, as the Synthesis Report (n. 13c) did, recalling the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate evangelium* (PE I,8), that “the Roman Curia does not place itself between the Pope and the Bishops, but rather places itself at the service of both”

- the experience of the Council of Cardinals (C9) confirms the usefulness of bodies of co-responsibility that accompany and support the Petrine service to unity, both periodically (Synod of the whole Church) and permanently (Council of Cardinals or Patriarchs or “Senate of the Pope”, composed of bishops elected by the Episcopal Conferences)

- Since in the one Baptism all Christians participate in the *sensus fidei*, in facing the new challenges of deepening the understanding of the Gospel and the effort to give a Christian witness adequate to our times, it is essential to create stable instances of dialogue, exchange and collaboration, such as the National Councils of Churches Christians, and include representatives of other Christian Churches in places of reflection, discussion, discernment, counsel and decision-making at all levels of the Church, particularly valorising their experiences in the various aspects of synodality.