



“Enlarge the space of your tent”

(Is 54:2)

**WORKING DOCUMENT
FOR THE CONTINENTAL STAGE**



Prayer

Lord, you have gathered all your People in Synod. We give you thanks for the joy experienced by those who decided to set out to listen to God and to their brothers and sisters during this year, with an attitude of welcome, humility, hospitality and siblinghood. Help us to enter these pages as on “holy ground.” Come Holy Spirit: may you be the guide of our journey together....



Introduction

“... it is clear that no single document could condense the depth of faith, vitality of hope and energy of charity that overflow from the contributions received. Behind them one glimpses the power and richness of the experience that the different Churches have had by setting out and opening themselves to the diversity of voices that have taken the floor. Enabling this encounter and dialogue is the meaning of the synodal journey, whose ultimate purpose is not to produce documents but to open horizons of hope for the fulfilment of the Church's mission” (# 6)

Chapter 1: The Synodal Journey Experience

“The reports sent by Churches across the world give voice to the joys, hopes, sufferings and wounds of Christ’s disciples...” (#15)

Description of the first stage of the journey as. . .



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Description of the first stage of the journey:

- Increase feeling of belonging to the Church
- **Expressed appreciation of the method of Spiritual conversation** - an opportunity to name lights and shadows
- Expressed desire to continue the journey because for the first time the peoples opinions are welcomed.



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Description of the first stage of the journey:

The Challenges:

- Coronavirus Pandemic - Limited Consultation
- Understanding the meaning of synodality
- Need further explanation of the synodal material
- Failure to organize synodal gatherings
- Resistance and rejection of the process
- Fear of the Church moving towards democratic-type majority principle
- Fears and resistance from the clergy
- Passivity of the laity
- Struggle to understand and articulate the priests’ and bishops’ role within the synodal process
- Separation of the priests from the rest of the People of God
- Scandal of the abuse of minors and the vulnerable by members of the Clergy
- Spiritual, Sexual, Economic Abuse, and Abuse of authority and of conscience.



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Description of the first stage of the journey:

- A call for cultural change to create greater transparency, accountability and co-responsibility
- Wars, persecutions, and massacres posed severe challenges.

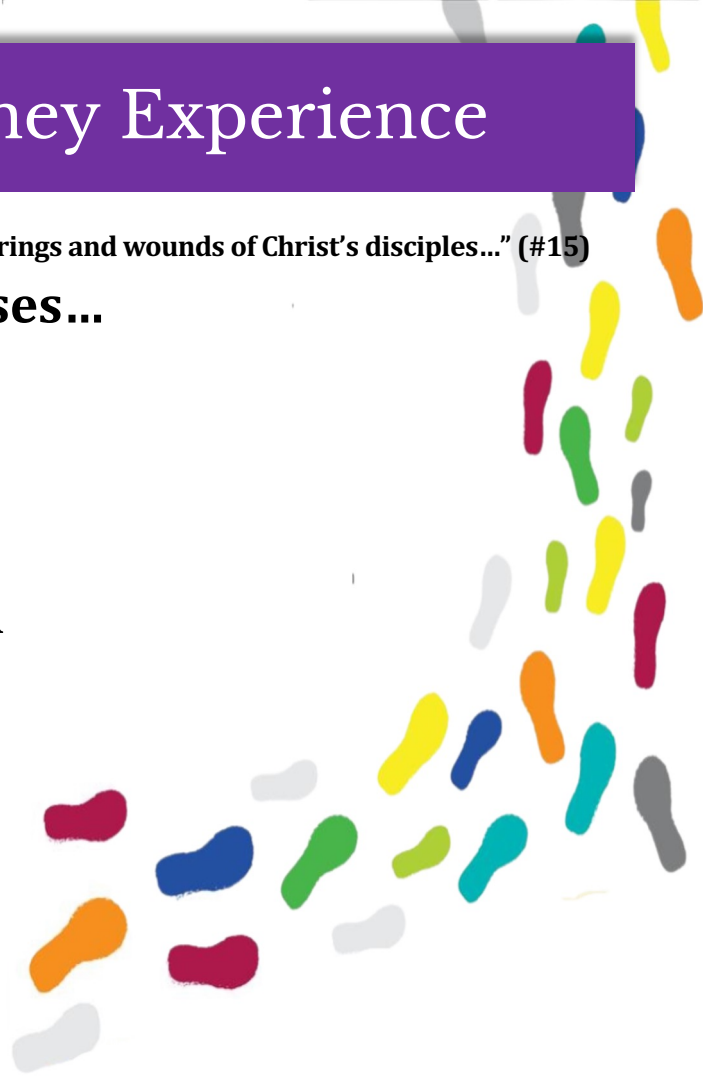


Chapter 1: The Synodal Journey Experience

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Our Common baptismal dignity. The syntheses...

- Sensed a greater awareness of our common dignity and vocation through baptism
- Stressed on the baptismal dignity of all Christian denominations & common mission
- Expressed desire to end collective alienation/exile from one’s baptismal identity.



Chapter 2: Listening to the Scriptures - The Tent as the Biblical Icon

“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:

‘Enlarge the space of your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly, lengthen your ropes and make firm your pegs...’ (Is 54:2).

Chapter 2: Listening to the Scriptures - The Tent as the Biblical Icon

The syntheses reflected on:

- The vision of the Church as, **“An expansive, not homogeneous dwelling, capable of sheltering all, but open, letting in and out (cf. Jn. 10:9), and moving toward embracing the Father and all of humanity...”**
- Hospitality as making room for diversity
- A call to self-emptying in order to be filled by Christ through the Holy Spirit
- **“It is under this condition that the members of the Church, each and all together, will be able to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the mission assigned by Jesus Christ to his Church: it is a liturgical, Eucharistic act.”**