



“Enlarge the space of your tent”

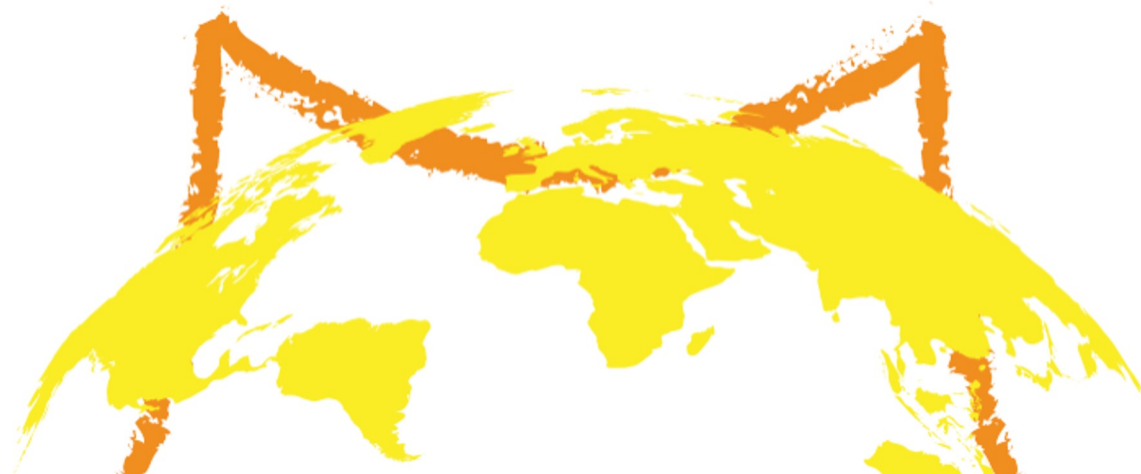
(Is 54:2)

**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....



Chapter 3: Towards a Missionary Synodal Church

The Biblical Imagery of the Tent

Family and Home – places where people wish to belong

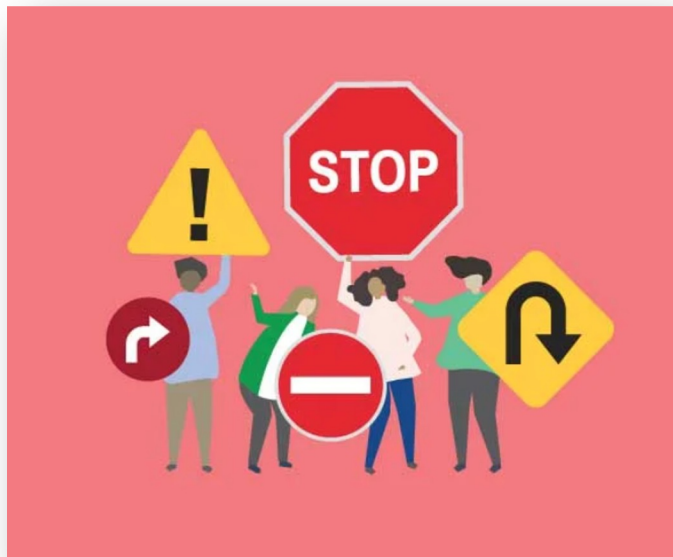
Dynamic of home and exile – belonging and exclusions are tensions in the reports



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- **Spiritual temptations to avoid:**
 - Remaining trapped in conflicts that leads to factions
 - Becoming spiritually detached and disinterested in the tensions.



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- Vision of Church: Capable of radical inclusion, shared belonging, and deep hospitality
- Call to go outside of familiar territories



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Listening that becomes welcoming:

“In this journey, the Churches have realised that the path to greater inclusion – the enlarged tent – is a gradual one. It begins with listening and requires a broader and deeper conversion of attitudes and structures, as well as new approaches to pastoral accompaniment; it begins in a readiness to recognise that the peripheries can be the place where a call to conversion resounds along with the call to put the Gospel more decisively into practice” (#32).

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- **Reports reflect on the difficulty of listening deep and accepting being transformed by it:**
 - ❖ Lack of communal processes of listening and discernment
 - ❖ Call for more training in listening
 - ❖ Persistent structural obstacles such as hierarchical structures, clerical and individualistic culture, sociocultural and economic disparities, absence of 'in-between' spaces.

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- **Reports are sensitive to loneliness and isolation of clergy:**
 - Attentive listening needed by clergy to negotiate aspects of their emotional and sexual life
 - Appropriate forms of welcome and protection for women and children of priests who broke their vows.



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- **Option for the young, people with disabilities and defense of life:**
 - Concern of the meagre representation of the voices of the young in the synod process and church life
 - Youth formation and accompaniment needed

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- **Lack of appropriate structures and means of accompanying the disable and vulnerable:**
 - Calling for ways to welcome their contribution and promote their participation
 - Commitment to the defence of the fragile.

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- **Listening to those who feel neglected and excluded:**
 - The first step towards inclusion and transformation is the experience of being listened to.
 - Source of sadness: Unwelcoming of some synodal participants
 - Some feel the tension between belonging to the Church and their loving relationships such as remarried divorcees, single parents, polygamous marriage, LGBTQ people
 - Uncertainty about responding to these groups and need for discernment on the part of the Universal Church
 - Those who left ordained ministry and married need to be welcomed
 - The voices of the excluded were largely absent from the synod process
 - The reports include them because others spoke with them
 - Groups mentioned – poorest, lonely elderly, indigenous peoples, migrants, street children, alcoholics, drug addicts, persons with criminals records, victims of trafficking, survivors of abuse, prisoners, groups suffering discrimination and violence...

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Sisters and brothers for mission

“The Church’s mission is to make Christ present in the midst of His People through reading the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments and through all actions that care for the wounded and suffering...” (#41)



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- Enlarging our tent is at the heart of this **missionary activity**. The Church needs to practice synodality
- **Dream of a Church:** To be involved with the world's challenges and capable of responding concretely.

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- **The Church's Mission in today's world:**
 - Call to walk with people of other faiths and beliefs
 - Need for social, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual exchange and collaboration
 - Challenges of tribalism, sectarianism, racism, poverty, and gender inequality within the life of the Church and world
 - Influence of tribalism and ethnic discrimination on the ecclesial community.
 - Deep desire to hear the cry of the poor and the earth
 - Importance of the role of the Church in the public sphere such as peace building and reconciliation and actions for justice
 - Weakness of deep ecumenical engagement and need to breathe new life into the ecumenical journey

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- **Walking Together with all Christians:**
 - Closer communion between different Christian Churches
 - “Ecumenism of Martyrdom”: Persecution uniting Christians
 - Greater attention to divisive realities such as sharing Eucharist with other Christians
 - Growth of inter-church and interfaith families: Need for greater accompaniment
 - Church fulfills its mission within specific cultural contexts, influence by social changes such as sectarianism, tribalism
 - Lack of trust and credibility resulting from the abuse crises.
 - Problem of historical entanglement of Church and politics, pluralism and the pressures experienced by families, and its impact of intergenerational relationships

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- **Cultures, Religions and Dialogue** – A call for meaningful inter-cultural approach:
 - Begin by walking together and appreciating cultural differences
 - Call to better recognize, engage, integrate and respond to the richness of local cultures
 - Call to pay attention to the situation of indigenous peoples – their spirituality, wisdom, and culture
 - Need to reread history together with them, draw inspiration from the Church's injustice, ask forgiveness, reconcile apparent contradictions between cultural practices and traditional beliefs and Church's teachings.



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Communion, Participation, and Co-responsibility: A call to recognize the common dignity of the baptism as means for the renewal of the Church.

- Beyond Clericalism:
 - Expression of deep appreciation and affection for dedicated priests and concerns for the high demands in ministry
 - Importance of ridding the Church of clericalism: A means for everyone to fulfill a common mission
 - Expression of desire for renewed forms of leadership – priestly, episcopal, religious, and lay
 - Need for relational and collaborative leadership and forms of authority capable of generating solidarity and co-responsibility
 - Expression of gratitude for those who exercise synodal leadership.

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- **Rethinking Women's Participation:** A call for Catholic women to be valued as baptized and equal members of the People of God:
 - Women loved the Church but feel sadness that their lives are misunderstood and contributions and charism undervalued
 - **The Challenge: Women are in majority, men in minority, yet most decision making and governance role are held by men**
 - Church needs to attract more men to active membership and enable women to participate more fully at all levels
 - Women call for Church to be at their side, greater understanding and supporting in addressing forces of destruction and exclusion
 - Women desire Church and society to be a place of flourishing, active participation, and healthy belonging
 - Concern for equal participation of women
 - No single agreement to the question of vocation
 - Need for continue discernment in relation to the role of women in governing structures, training to preach in parish settings, female deacons, priestly ordination of women
 - Recognition that women religious and women are at the forefront of synodal practices.

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- **Charism, Vocations, and Ministries:**
 - Synodal life of the Church – A shared response to the gifts of the Spirit
 - Need for co-responsibility
 - Need to articulate the unity of mission with the plurality of ministries
 - Need to recognize and promote ministries
 - Sufficient space for the exercise of lay ministries
 - Need to consider charisms and ministries emerging from associations, lay movements and new religious communities
 - Need to harmonize charismatic gifts and the hierarchical gifts.

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“The synodal journey has brought out a number of tensions . . . We should not be afraid of them, but articulate them in a process of constant discernment, so as to harness them as a source of energy without them becoming destructive: only in this way will it be possible to continue walking together, rather than each going their own way. This is why the Church also needs to give a synodal form and way of proceeding to its own institutions and structures, particularly with regard to governance. Canon law will need to accompany this process of structural renewal creating the necessary changes to the arrangements currently in place...” (#73)

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- Structures need well-formed people with vision and skills
- Skills need to be supported by a spirituality to sustain the synodality and “avoid reducing this reality to technorganizational issues.”

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- **Structure and Institutions:**
 - “In the context of a world that is both globalised and fragmented, each continent, because of its common historical roots, its tendency towards socio-cultural commonality and the fact that it presents the same challenges for the mission of evangelisation, constitutes a privileged sphere for stirring up a synodal dynamic that strengthens links between the Churches, encourages the sharing of experiences and the exchange of gifts, and helps to imagine new pastoral options....” (#73).



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Structure and Institutions:

- **Synodality challenges the Roman Curia:** Need for a more synodal practice and spirit in the Curia
- **Synodality challenges Episcopal Conferences:** Need to promote communion on a continental level
- **Synodality challenges diocesan structures:** Economic, diocesan and pastoral councils: decision making is made based on processes of communal discernment
- Transparency as key to authentic synodality
- Transparency propels accountability
- Need to include person with competences in management of economic and governance issues
- Call to integrate synodality into the ways of governing, and renewal of governance structures
- **Theological faculties:** Need deepen ecclesiology, Christology and Pneumatology based on the synodal experiences
- **Synodality challenges consecrated life:** Emphasis on participation of all members in community.

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- Formation: Need to provide formation in synodality:
 - Formation in listening and dialogue
 - Formation for those called to leadership, especially priests



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- **Spirituality:** “A culture of synodality, which is indispensable for animating structures and institutions, requires adequate formation, and, above all, needs to be nurtured by familiarity with the Lord and the capacity to listen to the voice of the Spirit...” (#84).
 - **Synodal Spirituality:** Attention to interiority and conscience
 - **Synodal Spirituality:** Welcomes differences and promotes harmony, draws from the tensions, embrace the contributions of each person
 - Engage and practice the method of spiritual conversation
 - Integrate the spiritual dimension within the governance structures
 - Embrace a diversity of spiritual traditions

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Synodal life and Liturgy: Link between synodality and liturgy:

- Eucharist as source and summit of the Church's synodal dynamism
- Bonding among diverse people occur through popular religiosity

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- **Managing tensions: Renewal and Reconciliation:**
 - **Encouraging synodal style of liturgical celebrations:** active participation, welcoming differences, valuing all ministries, recognizing charism.
 - Need to rethink a liturgy too concentrated on the celebrant.
 - Need to address the relationship between synodality and the pre-conciliar rites
 - Problems of relating to the modalities of faith inculturation and interreligious dialogue that affects forms of celebration and prayer.
 - **Shortcomings of celebratory praxis:** liturgical protagonism of the priest and passivity of the liturgical community, poor preaching, a gap between the homily content and faith, concreteness of life, separation between the liturgical life of the assembly and the family network of the community
 - **Source of suffering:** Access to the Eucharist and other Sacraments due to remoteness of communities, charging fees to access celebrations, inaccessibility of sacraments by remarried divorcees

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- A Synodal style of celebrating: Synod process is an opportunity to experience the diversity of prayer forms and celebrations:
 - Need to reform the liturgy to link close with the identity of the Church
 - Linking liturgical celebrations with the various forms of dialogical sharing and fraternal conviviality
 - An asset: A variety of ritual traditions of liturgical prayer and symbolic forms with which diverse cultures express themselves.