

SYNOD REPORT SUMMARY OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF CHILE

I.- Introduction: The Synodal Experience

People of God, the path of hope

The present synthesis corresponds to the final discernment of the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the synodal process of the Church in Chile. We have sought to be respectful of this process lived at the various levels of the ecclesial community, the fruits of which are expressed especially in the Reports of each particular Church.

We have experienced this time of Synod to which the Holy Father has called us, as a time of the Spirit, which has enriched and strengthened the process of ecclesial discernment that we began as Church in Chile in 2018. It has been a time of dialogue and discernment, of organized work in various spaces and Church levels, in order to encourage participation and to involve the largest number of communities with their contributions.

We have undertaken this synodal journey at a very special time in our history. To the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we have added the social and political crisis that we are experiencing as a country, especially since October 2019. We have also continued to be affected in the Church by the abuse crisis, noting in this same synodal journey the serious consequences of this whole situation in the life of Catholics and their communities. However, the community reunion made possible by the lesser severity of the pandemic, together with the same synodal experience, has helped us to recognize ourselves as the People of God, which fulfills its vocation *by walking together*. Thus, a current of joy has arisen, which not only makes us value this time of listening and discernment that we have lived, but also allows us to look to the future with hope, called to seek new ways and styles of being Church: synodal, prophetic and hopeful.

In this process there has also been resistance, lack of participation, communities that did not join. This, in part, could have been due to the novelty of the challenge posed, since many communities are not accustomed to this way of living the Church. It was also due to the fact that some leaders and pastors did not assume the animating and guiding role that corresponded to them.

Several diocesan reports complain about the lack or weak involvement of priests. However, the majority tendency has been collaborative, proactive and prophetic, promoting synodal participation and reflection. This report should not be read without losing sight of this commitment of faith and love of the People of God with the Lord and his Church.

A road with a history

This ecclesial itinerary that we have been living, is framed in a long synodal tradition of the Church of our country, expressed in the realization of synods and assemblies in most of the dioceses, and also at national level in the realization of two ecclesial assemblies held in 2007 and 2013. Thus, an attempt has been made to encourage and create practices of participation and listening, in order to live the experience of the People anointed by the Spirit, which gathers and discerns the signs of the times.

In tune with this tradition, and in the context of the crisis experienced as Church in Chile, the Bishops made the decision, in an extraordinary Assembly held in July 2018, to initiate a *time of ecclesial discernment*, with broad consultations with the People of God. Later, this initiative was enriched with the Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, which motivated many lay people to participate with their contributions, both personal and group.

Thus we arrived at October 2021, the date on which the Synod on Synodality began. From the beginning we said that we were not starting something totally new, but that we were living, in continuity with the previous processes, *a single great process*. All these dialogues shed light on various aspects of ecclesial life, contributing to a greater awareness in areas such as participation, leadership styles, collaborative structures, outdated practices, and, above all, clues or signs about the direction the Church should take in view of its pastoral conversion. Thus, yearnings and intentions were expressed to grow in closeness, in reciprocal support among the diverse members of the People of God, in creative and inclusive leadership, in community and faith discernment for decision making, and in the need for formation and renewal in pastoral processes, structures and practices that strengthen the evangelizing mission.

The call to deep and urgent conversion that we are experiencing as a Church has been expressed in the desire to "recover the centrality of Christ"¹, "return to the Word", "return to the sources", "deepen the life of prayer". At the organizational level, it has been expressed in the challenge to strengthen participation, listening and dialogue, all of which is expressed in the document: *Systematization. Ecclesial Discernment 2019. Report of Results*, a fundamental input of this itinerary that we have lived as People of God on pilgrimage in Chile.

Assessment of local processes

The articulation of the different ecclesial processes in a single synodal path has been carried out fundamentally in the local Churches, which has made it possible to respect the diversity of each one of them and, at the same time, has enriched the exchange in the national instances.

¹ Whenever there is a quotation in quotation marks and no reference is made to a specific source, these are direct quotations from the voices of the participants in the synodal process, contained mainly in the diocesan

reports.

The emphasis of this entire journey has been placed on two areas of discernment: *more synodal structures and more evangelical relationships*, as a single path of dialogue, listening and discernment.

It is necessary to highlight the creativity that has taken place in most of the dioceses to encourage the participation and dialogue of the People of God, creating different instances: consultations open to the parishioners, parish assemblies and other Church groups, diocesan councils, experiences of community prayer, meetings by zones or deaneries, shared reflection, surveys. All of these are participatory methodologies that favored "sitting at the table, looking each other in the eye and dialoguing in truth".

In concluding this section, we value and are grateful for the synodal journey as a communitarian, ecclesial and spiritual experience, as well as a space for discernment, dialogue and the search for the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world. It has been a clear manifestation that all the People of God is anointed with the Holy Spirit, which requires us not to lose our roots in order to seek the will of God that will guide our mission.

II.- Body of the Synthesis: Subjects on which there was greater consensus

A synodal, prophetic and hopeful Church that puts Jesus at the center of its mission.

There are several aspects on which a widespread and shared feeling has been expressed regarding the need for changes, which should be translated into options that will guide the work of our Church in the coming years. In this section we will address those themes that have achieved a practically general consensus, in which there is agreement by more than 90% of the local Churches. We have systematized them in three dimensions: Synodal, Prophetic and Hopeful Church. However, none of them can be approached without starting from a fundamental pillar that we recognize as an unavoidable requirement: to recover the centrality of Jesus Christ in the life of each one and of the ecclesial community as a whole.

A fundamental principle: the centrality of Jesus Christ.

The greatest consensus that has been expressed is the conviction that the ecclesial crisis in all its dimensions has its origin in "weakness of faith and unfaithfulness to Jesus". Consequently, any transformation must begin with personal and communitarian conversion that assumes the challenge of *placing Jesus at the center of the Church's life in order to begin again from Him*, thus accepting the invitation of the Word of God: *"Let each one take heed how he builds. No one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3:10-11).*

We are witnesses that the People of God, for some time now, have been crying out and longing to recover the Gospel origins of the first Christian communities, where so many disciples learned to center their lives on the Lord, from a true experience of personal

encounter with Him and His Gospel: *"All the baptized are called to start again from the beginning of the Gospel"*.

Christ, to recognize and follow his Presence with the same reality and newness, the same power of affection, persuasion and hope, as his encounter with the first disciples on the banks of the Jordan....".²

1.- Synodal Church

1.1. Understanding the Church as the People of God

One observation that we can make with joy is that the different communities have a rich experience and understanding of the Church as the People of God. The synodal journey has allowed us to strengthen this self-understanding received in Revelation and has helped us to recognize ourselves as members of a single People, children of the same Father and anointed with the diversity of charisms of the Holy Spirit. Lay people, consecrated persons, priests, deacons and bishops, we understand ourselves as co-responsible and protagonists of the life and mission of the Church, based on the fundamental equality given by baptism and enriched with various ministries.

In the Diocesan Reports there are numerous expressions through which this richness of the understanding of the category of the People of God is manifested, but also a feeling of loss has been expressed, with the consequent longing to recover what has been lost: "to become a people again". And a relevant part of this dynamism is to become aware that we all share as People of God not only an equal dignity, but also the same fragility. From this perspective, we perceive a call from God to build "a more humble Church, far removed from all power, poorer and evangelical", "renewed and humble, not powerful in the human way", "that rolls up its sleeves and plays to the skin, testimonial, poor and small, doing what Jesus tells us".

1.2. More evangelical relationships

Even though we value the spaces of encounter and the instances of participation that exist in our local Churches, a demand has been expressed in the synodal journey to cultivate more fraternal and dialogical forms of relating to one another, characterized by traits of closeness to all and among all the members of the People of God.

The communities are demanding a renewal of the ways of relating to one another and of exercising authority in the Church, because they see authoritarian ways of exercising services, which has caused much harm. Numerous faithful have distanced themselves or have withdrawn from participating in ecclesial spaces, because they have not felt valued, welcomed and accompanied, or have not found cordial spaces to live and celebrate the faith.

² Aparecida, No. 549

This presence of authoritarian leadership is associated with the manifestation of other anti-values and problems in the Church, such as individualism, clericalism, misuse of power, difficulty in resolving conflicts and lack of dialogue, all of which urge us to work for fraternity.

In order to create more evangelical spaces in our communities, it is necessary to overcome what has been called the *culture of clericalism*, which manifests itself in the laity as well as in priests and consecrated persons. In this culture, authority is often lived as a privilege and not as an evangelical service or a charism given for the good of all; while participation and the assumption of responsibilities is concentrated only in a few, excluding especially the laity, women and young people, all of which generates dynamics of dependence and infantilization that prevent many of the faithful from living a mature faith. In the Church we need each other, as brothers and sisters, to live our faith and mission: this is the way to overcome clericalism.

1.3. Ministeriality from the Church People of God and Body of Christ.

We understand our vocation and mission as pastors within and at the service of the People of God, so that it is not possible to sustain the identity of the ordained ministry apart from a relationship of reciprocal enrichment between pastors and laity. Indeed, all members of the Church depend on one another, not only for structural reasons, but because our identity and mission would be incomplete without reciprocal bonds. We are therefore invited to understand communion not only as a harmony among all, but as a call to put in common the gift that each of us has received from God.

However, the category of the People of God does not contradict or deny the understanding of the Church as the *Body of Christ*, in which there is a diversity of members and offices, and in which Christ himself is the Head, "from whom the whole body (...) is sustained and united and grows according to God's plan" (Col 2:19). These are complementary categories, which allow us a better understanding of ministeriality.

1.4. Status and care of the clergy

This synodal time has allowed us to look at the weaknesses and strengths of the clergy serving in our Churches. The communities have shown an authentic appreciation for their priests and deacons, for the spirit of dedication and apostolic commitment in so many of them, and have expressed the desire to care for their pastors. But they have also expressed their desires and demands for them to live closer to their faithful, accompany their communities and get involved in the work and life of the faithful: "dedicated, helpful, simple and humble priests".

We must continue to build more synodal structures and more evangelical relationships, animated by fraternity and service. The priestly ministry must be understood in a more evangelical way, placing the emphasis more on service than on power. Without ignoring the particularity of its character as a sacrament of Christ the Shepherd, perhaps the understanding of the priesthood as the head of the community has translated, at times, into clericalist practices that have harmed us.

1.5. Pastoral management with more synodal procedures

The conversion of the Church and the establishment of a new culture requires not only more fraternal and evangelical relationships, but also more synodical pastoral and management practices.

Many dioceses have made reference to the guidelines for the exercise of service in the Church contained in the document *Integrity in Ecclesial Service* (ISE), published by the Episcopal Conference of Chile in 2020. These are guidelines related to witness, commitment to justice and equity, the encounter with others (good treatment), the promotion of healthy and respectful environments that prevent abusive situations, the organization of pastoral care and self-care, which are recognized as an essential contribution to guide the renewal of the Church and implement styles of administration and management at the service of a synodal culture. The fact that the articulating axis of this document is the integrity in the ecclesial service, reminds us of the importance of sustaining our pastoral action in evangelical values that promote the quality and coherence of our service, and in parameters that allow us to review and evaluate our progress or setbacks in the management.

In this field, it is necessary to make a more determined effort to achieve the effective functioning of pastoral councils, economic councils and other instances, in order to create evangelical practices and spaces at all levels of the Church's life: in parishes, communities, dioceses, Catholic schools, etc. The expectations of transformation must be mediated by structural changes and institutionalized procedures that do not depend on who is in charge. Therefore, the spaces and forms of participation and pastoral management, as well as decision making, need to be associated with participatory, informed and transparent processes, where permanent supervision of the pastoral, economic and administrative action of pastoral agents, whether clerics, lay or consecrated, is not absent.

1.6. Women's participation in decision-making spaces

Women have been protagonists in the synodal process, with a higher numerical participation than men, and they also have an active presence in our communities. However, the diocesan reports often note that their contribution to the life of the Church has yet to be more fully integrated. They often occupy secondary roles, are not always entrusted with lay responsibilities at the same level as men, and lack greater integration and participation in decision-making bodies. Although progress has been made in this area, the Church's leadership is dominated by a predominantly male perspective.

1.7. Youth participation

The low participation of young people in the ecclesial life, and in many places their total absence, is a reality that worries and saddens us. It is urgent to create instances of participation from the reality of young people to vitalize and renew the life of our communities, which undoubtedly requires us to enter and connect with their world, to overcome or shorten the distance with their issues of interest.

It is imperative that we adapt our action and pastoral proposal to accommodate young people, and that we can be as a Church an alternative that welcomes and accompanies them in their search and development processes.

We know that for many young people the ecclesial structure does not make sense for them to live their faith, and many others do not feel listened to or accepted in the life of the Church. That is why a renewed action in this field is so urgent.

1.8. Good Treatment and overcoming all forms of abuse

Creating a synodal culture requires living relationships that are characterized by good treatment and that prevent the occurrence of all types of abuse. Although there are still many challenges to be addressed in this field, starting with a more satisfactory response to the victims and to the communities damaged and wounded by the crimes committed by some members of the Church, it would be unjust not to recognize the progress made as an ecclesial community. The guiding documents, the institutional framework in operation, and the basic formation in prevention of thousands of pastoral agents, among other aspects, are the hopeful testimony of a laborious work, which has also counted on the collaboration of surviving victims of ecclesiastical abuse.

It is necessary, however, to continue advancing in the implementation of reparation practices and in the actual functioning in all local Churches of the minimum institutional framework for prevention, as has been proposed in the documents of the Church in Chile.

2.- Prophetic Church (discernment of the signs of the times)

2.1. Prophetic dimension of faith

In most of the Diocesan Reports, the communities express the need for "the Church to return to a leading role", where it strongly assumes the prophetic dimension of its mission, especially considering the complex socio-political reality we are living in Chile. In our episcopal discernment, we have noticed that today the Church has a simpler presence in the midst of society and we cannot expect to repeat the ways and contexts that were significant in the past. However, the prophetic witness of a Church going out, inclusive, welcoming and merciful with the discarded, although not highlighted by the media, continues to be a mandate that comes from the Lord.

From our baptismal consecration, we recognize the common vocation that we all have as the People of God, that is to say, the prophetic role or dimension that is part of our condition as Christians.

2.2. Evangelization of culture

The Church founded by Jesus Christ is a pilgrim in the midst of the world and, therefore, must know how to dialogue with the environment in which it carries out its mission. This requires constant renewal in order to understand the language of the culture and, from there, to proclaim Jesus Christ as the way of life in order to transform reality. There too, in the culture, she listens to God's calls to renew her own ways.

A challenge that appears in this area is the need for the Church to enter decisively into the technological world in order to better develop its mission. The knowledge and use of contemporary technologies, with teams trained for this purpose, is fundamental if we want to dialogue with the youth and with the men and women of today. It is an important step towards a better transmission of the faith.

2.3. A Church at the service of peace, social justice and care for the common home

Most of the Diocesan Reports insist on the need for us, as disciples of Christ, to insert ourselves in society and live a greater commitment to social causes, knowing in depth the aspirations and problems that move and affect our brothers and sisters. It continues to be a challenge to make real what the Council expressed: "The joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the people of our time, especially the poor and those who suffer, are at the same time the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of Christ's disciples "³.

Chilean society has lived through a profound social and political crisis in recent years, a crisis that still does not seem to find a channel that allows a fuller response to the demands and desires expressed by the citizens. The Church, even living its own crisis, has accompanied this historical time with the Word of God and its solidarity action; and although it does not appear with the prominence of other times, the action of many faithful and their communities is an authentic sign of the ecclesial commitment with the common good.

A particularly sensitive dimension at the present time is the concern for the care of the environment and the recognition of social rights that will allow in the country a greater respect for the human dignity of all. The Church is called to decisively promote these causes and to make a contribution from her rich social doctrine and evangelizing practice, knowing that "there are not two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but a single and complex socio-environmental crisis [that demands] an integral approach to combat poverty, to restore dignity to the excluded and simultaneously to care for nature "⁴.

3.- Hopeful Church (Missionary and Samaritan)

3.1. Missionary Joy

As Christians, we know that we are freely loved by God and we understand that we are called to evangelize, summoned by the Lord to bear witness to the Good News of his Kingdom. This is the source of our joy. That is why we recognize missionary dynamism as an essential note of the Church, because she "exists to evangelize "⁵. This is a task that has historically mobilized and continues to mobilize numerous members of the People of God.

³ Gaudium et spes, No. 1.

⁴ Laudato si, No. 139.

⁵ Evangelii Nuntiandi, No. 14.

The ecclesial crisis has perhaps led us to be too centered on ourselves. It is necessary to get out of this self-centeredness and become an outgoing Church that recovers the missionary dynamism from the centrality of Jesus Christ. With Pope Francis we want to take up this challenge: "Let us go out, let us go out to offer the life of Jesus Christ to all (...) I prefer a Church that is bruised, wounded and stained by going out into the streets, rather than a Church that is sick because of its confinement and the comfort of clinging to its own security"⁶.

3.2. The need to renew faith formation processes

Particular mention should be made of formation and catechesis, which have been amply addressed in the synodal journey as urgent ecclesial renewals. Our initial formation, regardless of its quality, thoroughness or purpose, has not sufficiently enabled us to respond in the best way to the society in which we live and to proclaim the Gospel in its entirety in its midst. For this reason, formation cannot be restricted only to preparing pastoral agents or be designed for the intellectual development of individuals, but must contribute to the strengthening of a more consistent discipleship identity, which raises up Christians who are convinced and convincing of their faith, whose mission will arise from their encounter with Christ. It must also integrate and strengthen the various dimensions of the human being: physical, emotional and spiritual, in light of the searches, needs and desires of today's believing men and women.

A no lesser challenge in this area is to form the faithful for synodality, in view of a more co-responsible attitude of all in the life of the Church and a better exercise of authority.

3.3. Catechesis at all levels

The synodal journey has served to revive in the Church the need for a renewal of catechesis, at all levels and in its various aspects: method, content, duration, stages, etc. It has been insisted that it should favor an authentic personal and communitarian experience of encounter with Jesus, expressing the joyful proclamation of the kerygma, introducing the experience of the mystery of faith through a more active and participative liturgy, linking the Christian community and contributing to express the faith through fraternal life and service to the most fragile. Renewing catechetical proposals and forming catechists is an urgent challenge.

3.4. Family and education. Transmission of faith

Several diocesan reports highlight with concern that we are facing a real evangelizing urgency, due to the great difficulties and deficiencies that the processes of transmission of the faith are experiencing in our culture. Likewise, there is an educational urgency, because education is often reduced to a utilitarian and functional understanding, and its integral character and its service to the formation of the person is not sufficiently developed.

⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 49.

3.5. Popular piety

Popular piety is good news that is dressed in different colors throughout the country, embodying the culture of a people who believe and live their faith in profound harmony with their environment and ancestral heritage. It is important "to situate popular piety not only as a theme, but also as an ecclesial reality and identity of one's own spirituality. In addition to reviving the desire to know and live our faith more from this theological place."

Popular piety is "transformed into the richness of our Church", a dynamic presence of the Spirit of God that is expressed through its own languages for the transmission and experience of faith: in religious dances and pilgrimages to Marian sanctuaries, in songs of the divine and religiosity linked to the earth, the sun and the sea. A good news where the dance and the renewing joy allow the link with the sacred.

3.6. Welcoming and inclusive church

The Diocesan Reports agree on the need to be a more inclusive Church. There is a perception that either the Church has excluded some, or there are people who have excluded themselves from a community that is no longer meaningful to them. The challenge of greater inclusiveness is not just about broadening the range of people we need to welcome, but about realizing that the Church needs to care about all people.

It is necessary for the Church to be a space "where people feel comfortable, where they can express their opinions, feelings and beliefs without being judged", "true spaces of sincere, free and transparent dialogue", "healing spaces for all".

3.7. Marginalized and excluded: empathy with the world of pain

Presence with those who suffer appears as a *sine qua non* condition for every possibility of conversion and ecclesial transformation. The breadth with which those whom we are called to accompany appear is moving: "all who suffer", "we must accompany all pain". Probably the pandemic context has highlighted the urgency of attending to all kinds of needs: physical, emotional and spiritual, to care for the integral health of people.

Today, the preferential option for the poor is made concrete in a special way for migrants, the elderly, those who suffer from alcohol and drug dependency, and people with disabilities.

3.8. Church and people with different sexual orientations.

Along the lines of an inclusive and welcoming Church, the need to open up to people of so-called sexual diversity, who have often felt judged or misunderstood in the Church, has resonated in a particular way in the synodal journey.

In consonance with what has happened in the culture, it seems important that the ecclesial community make concrete gestures and promote initiatives in this field, so that also those who understand themselves to be part of sexual diversity can drink from the sources of the Gospel, inserted in the Church, and from there nourish their life in all its dimensions.

Episcopal discernment has expressed the need for the Church as a whole to study this topic and its pastoral implications. Questions arise as to how to address at the same time the welcoming of sexual diversity and the truth about marriage and sexuality proper to Christian anthropology. There is also the question of the type of pastoral structures and the relationship with the rest of the community that an opening in this field implies, since the specific ecclesial experience in the face of this challenge is scarce.

III. Conclusions: next steps

A Church in conversion

Processes of ecclesial participation such as those we have experienced during this time of Synod and ecclesial discernment, while arousing hope, also awaken mistrust in some groups of Catholics, especially pastoral agents. It is feared that the results of the consultations and participation will end up being limited to exhortative documents, which leave things as they were or introduce changes very weakly. That is why in the diocesan reports there is an insistence that "all this cannot come to nothing", that there must be transforming actions and structures affected by these actions.

As Bishops, we consider it important to take charge of this yearning and demand, paying attention to those problem areas and their possible solutions that the faithful express. To ignore them would be to ignore the action of the Holy Spirit in all the People of God and to increase distrust.

Pope Francis, in his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, invites us to "advance on the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they are"⁷. And recalling the Second Vatican Council, he tells us that "Christ calls the pilgrim Church to a perennial reformation, of which the Church herself, as a human and earthly institution, is always in need"⁸. This conversion must touch the different levels of the ecclesial community: it must be *personal, structural and pastoral*, and it must mark our searches and paths, in such a way that, assuming the contributions of the different communities, we take charge of what the Spirit is whispering to us, and many times shouting loudly.

⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 25.

⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 26, citing Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* No. 6.

Commitment to truth, transparency, justice and reparation

The abuse crisis will continue to accompany us with its dire consequences in the life and mission of the Church, but it has also allowed us to acquire new convictions and priorities that we did not have before or did not consider in their real relevance. For this reason, we must decisively assume a commitment to truth, transparency, justice and reparation for those who have suffered sexual abuse, abuse of power and abuse of conscience. Personal, structural and pastoral conversion demands the banishment of authoritarianism, individualism and clericalism; only in this way will it be possible to overcome all types of abuse.

A true synodal culture

The renewal of the Church in Chile involves *fostering more evangelical relationships and creating a true synodal culture* that ensures the broad participation of the People of God, that facilitates and promotes the commitment of all its members, in order to build healthy structures and relationships that facilitate the encounter with the God of Life.

Clergy

It is essential to accompany the clergy in the challenges of their mission and in their life situations, as well as to enrich and renew the understanding of priestly ministry in the light of synodality. This synodal process cannot be lived only as an administrative overload or as one more task to assume, but we must open with the priests, and in the whole Church, a dialogue on the ministerial identity, according to the model of Jesus the Good Shepherd and attending to the challenges that we have today in the mission.

In this area, there is also a need for ongoing formation of the clergy at the national level, but especially at the diocesan level, in order to make a journey that truly enriches the majority of priests and deacons.

Woman

The need for a greater inclusion of women in the Church is a clamor that denotes urgency. Here a relevant dissonance appears: while in society the protagonism of women is clearly manifesting itself, in the Church it is still a weak dynamism. This is why some women feel uneasy: they feel discriminated against and excluded from a relevant part of the life of the Church, especially in what has to do with pastoral management and decision making. They believe that this is an expression of the clericalism and macho culture present within the Church.

Facing this challenge cannot remain only in the realm of attitudes, but it is necessary to integrate the presence and protagonism of women in ecclesial structures. The steps taken so far are appreciated: women have assumed important roles in some local Churches, as pastoral delegates, responsible for the pastoral management of parishes or other diocesan services. However, it is a path that needs to be deepened.

Youth

The participation of young people in the life of the Church is called to grow not only in number, but also in protagonism, contributing also in management and decision making. It is necessary "to give them greater participation in the planning of parish life, because often they are not integrated in the planning, but only to comply with what adults indicate". It is necessary "to let young people face the Church as a force that comes to face the future, they have the strength to change".

Now, more than bringing young people into the Church, it is a matter of going out to meet them: to value their searches, their ways of thinking and understanding life. This encounter can become an opportunity for conversion for the whole Church. "We feel challenged to generate a path of communion between young people and adults, that we value and respect each other in the diversity of opinions and life choices". This will enrich the fraternity and the mission of the Church, which is always called to be for young people a place of encounter with Christ, where each one can discover his or her own vocation.

We conclude this Report by recognizing that we are facing an historic opportunity, a gift of the Spirit, to humbly and decisively assume the path of pastoral conversion, at the service of the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us.

Synodality is not only a strategy or a resource, but the path that the Church must live as the People of God, in order to renew itself under the action of the Holy Spirit. The possibility of rethinking together, in an exercise of dialogue and shared discernment, the service we should develop, the changes we need to make and the action of God that we have to welcome and make grow, is a true gift of the Lord. We ask Him for the gift of fidelity and perseverance, in order to respond as pastors to the calls and hopes that our brothers and sisters in faith have expressed in this synodal process.

At the end, we turn our gaze to Jesus Christ, because only by placing Him at the center of the Church's life can we begin our journey again and again. We ask Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, to help us to place our hearts in the heart of her Son.

Episcopal Conference of Chile

Santiago, August 2022