

SYNOD OF SYNODALITY SUMMARY OF ARGENTINA



INTRODUCTION

Rereading the synodal experience

The present report that we present as the Argentine Episcopal Conference seeks to synthesize in a few pages some aspects of the evangelizing work of the Christian community present throughout the length and breadth of the territory of the Argentine Republic. This nation has not only a vast geography, but also multiple cultural realities coexisting within it, ranging from mega-cities to small villages; from native peoples to descendants of different migratory currents, this diversity makes possible a multifaceted beauty that is not always free of tensions. The Argentine Episcopal Conference is made up of seventy-one (71) particular churches, five (5) of them belonging to Eastern rites, one military bishopric and sixty-five (65) local churches. This diversity is grouped into eight pastoral regions divided according to some geographical/cultural elements that indicate common and differential traits. It is in an attempt to account for this richness that we address this contribution of the synodal process.

"Whosoever will be first, let
him be servant of all."
(Cf. Mk 10:44).

a. *Walking together* can be considered a note of the Church in Latin America that has been strengthening since the creation of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM). Since the Second Vatican Council, as a pilgrim Church in Argentina, we have also been consolidating this joint journey. Some of the almost 70 Dioceses and other ecclesial circumscriptions in the country have held synods or diocesan assemblies throughout their history. The communities have a grateful memory of these shared discernments that have given rise to profound pastoral renewals and have made it possible to energize the mission based on the believing discernment of local history. For others, on the other hand, the synod constitutes a new experience that challenges their organization.

b. In 2015 the call of Pope Francis to deepen synodality inspired the realization of several Diocesan Synods in the country. There are cases in which the local processes initiated, the proposal to participate in the Latin American Ecclesial Assembly (2021), and the preparation for the Synod 2021-2023 found ways to articulate and enrich each other. Other experiences, on the other hand, were a succession of works without much connection. On occasion, the conclusions reached in a previous convocation served as inputs for subsequent meetings.

c. As the Argentine Episcopal Conference (CEA) we received the call to Synod 2023 as a *Kairos*, and with joy and enthusiasm we appointed Marcelo Daniel COLOMBO, Archbishop of Mendoza, Cesar Daniel FERNANDEZ, Bishop of Jujuy and Angel Jose MACIN, Bishop of Reconquista, as the episcopal delegates for the national animation of the synodal process. In turn, they summoned diocesan delegates - lay men and women, priests and deacons, religious men and women - together with whom, in virtual instances of prayer, formation, reflection and exchange of information, they animated local processes in order to provide a report for each ecclesiastical circumscription that was later reflected in the work of group discernment by Pastoral Regions.

d. In the delegates' meetings, both virtual and face-to-face, creativity was promoted in the diocesan organization of the listening, recording, discernment, reflection and synthesis processes. Each diocese was free to proceed in the collection of voices and elaboration of conclusions, according to its resources, geographical and pastoral realities, and even its previous historical and recent experience in processes of these characteristics.

e. Some of the participants in the process have highlighted the *novelty* of the use of social networks and *online* forms used in the consultations, instances that were widely used during the peak moments of the COVID pandemic confinement.

f. The last step along this path, after the diocesan work, was to set up a team of experts with representatives from different ecclesiastical realities and professional fields to prepare this synthesis work.

BODY OF THE SYNTHESIS

Discernment of collected contributions

A CALL TO LISTEN AND LEARN TO DIALOGUE (2 and 3)¹

1 **Main ideas.** Listening to each other is the first step in building a Synodal Church, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. Listening to the Spirit to help us listen to our companions on the journey. We are all invited to speak with courage and *parresia*, that is, with freedom, truth and charity.

2 The Holy Spirit is resounding within us, asking us to come out of the enclosure that we sometimes go through as Church. Listening implies the disposition to learn from the other, to allow ourselves to be transformed by him. It requires a profound conversion that allows an encounter with Jesus and with our neighbor. It is not a strategy to transmit an unchangeable message. Listening and discernment go hand in hand.

3 The heart of the Gospel message proclaims that God loves us and that in Jesus he comes to meet us in order to redeem us. All baptized persons are invited to share the hope of the Good News of the Kingdom of God. At the same time, the Spirit urges us to ensure that our way of life bears witness to what we preach in word.

4 We want our listening to be humanizing, with fraternal time to attend to those who wish to be heard in their needs. A listening, like that of Jesus, from the heart, receiving life as it comes, and learning to reduce our prejudices. Listening becomes concrete, above all, when we listen to the voices that make us uncomfortable. This is one of the axes that the diocesan reports underline as relevant, either because we are living the fruits of having practiced this experience, or because we aspire to an improvement in this aspect. It was said: "*there was openness of heart to listen and this motivated listening spaces*".²

1 The numbers in parentheses refer to the ten thematic nuclei indicated in number 30 of the Preparatory Document and taken up in point 5.3 of the Vademecum.

2 What is placed in quotation marks and in italics are literal expressions taken from the reports of the various dioceses. The selected expressions are representative of generalized opinions.

Although we note that *"there is an outstanding lack of listening in our communities"* and that *"there is difficulty in engaging in sincere dialogue and listening to the world,"* we dream of a Church that listens to all people, excluding no one, especially suffering humanity. She listens to those who are going through difficult moments in their lives due to illness, loss of loved ones or deprivation of freedom.

5 We often experience tension among the various actors in ecclesial life, since we do not always value the richness of the encounter; consequently, the articulation of objectives and tasks is a challenge that we must face. A pyramidal communication scheme prevails in the communities, not always understandable by the recipients of the message, *"Not everyone has the same opportunities to participate and say their word"*. We note that this scheme hinders dialogue and favors the confinement of our ideas and prevents us from listening to other voices. However, along the synodal journey we have learned that, through patient and respectful listening, dissent can be overcome and community unity can be built. Frank, open and respectful dialogue is the gateway to discernment. We are called to form ourselves for the exercise of fraternal dialogue, which opens our hearts and impels us to be builders of bridges and not walls, particularly among brothers who come from different cultures. The Spirit moves us to work for a communication that favors communion and helps us to *"recognize our community conflicts and initiate a process of reconciliation"*. We noted the joy of many in feeling listened to and welcomed as full members of the People of God. We noted in a particular way the importance of listening to the victims of sexual abuse in the Church and to the teaching and non-teaching personnel of Catholic schools.

II... WHO ASKS US TO BECOME A CHURCH THAT WALKS UNITED (1, 7, 8, 9 and 10)

6 **Main Ideas.** In the Church and in society, we share the journey with other Christians of different confessions, to whom we are united by the same Baptism. In this way we build a Church that promotes dialogue, participation and co-responsibility. In this synodal style we discern, with the help of the Holy Spirit, what the community is telling us and we make decisions. Synodality implies receptivity to change, formation and continuous learning.

7 The reality is diverse in the different dioceses and the challenges are aimed at walking together as a *Church on the way out*, missionary and renewed. We have rejoiced with the proposal of Pope Francis that raises the issue of synodality as a priority, in terms of the usual functioning of the Church. The first two reactions were: on the one hand, to accept the need for synodality, which implies walking together, listening to each other, as a community, but also listening to the world, to people in their concrete environments, discovering and discerning the signs of the times. There was a general lack of knowledge of the synodal journey, which made it difficult to understand it as an essential feature of being Church. The synodal process shows us a Church that takes on different faces and is an invitation to think about synodality from different ecclesial modes, since synodality is not univocal, *"Although the synodal mode has been promoted in various dioceses, it is not so easy to specify the interactions between the various ecclesial protagonists: some call for greater presence and spiritual accompaniment by the priest, revaluing his role as pastor and guide of the parish; many speak of a clericalism that does not do any good"*.

8 The Spirit of God invites us to share the path of faith and goodness, feeling and witnessing at the same time the cordial closeness of Jesus. He urges all of us who are baptized to

active participation to love and serve, willing to learn, to change and to be creative. Faith tells us that we live in an "opportune time" (a *kairos*) that is both springtime and challenging. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us be witnesses of God's grace for today's culture.

9 We remember the paths we have traveled as a community in our organic or overall pastoral ministry, which have been the antecedents of these synodal processes. We discover that we like this way of being Church. Previous experiences of synodality enrich this new call to renew synodality. Brochero and so many people who went out on the roads to sow the Christian faith are an example; as well as companions on the road closer in time, such as Bishop Maletti, so remembered and valued in the Diocese of Merlo-Moreno. We do not forget that the life of faith of our people has been enriched with the contribution of various expressions of popular religiosity that express the closeness to Jesus and Mary, and has even been fertilized with the blood of the martyrs of Zenta, Monsignor Angelleli and the Martyrs of La Rioja.

10 The word "way" and the expression "being on the way" were key words in the regional reports. With these expressions we allude to the fact that we are making a new process that we call *Church on the way*. We feel that "to walk is also to listen and to share" and that each community is called to be "a post of travelers impelled to give bread and catechism". We want to build a Church that is more companionate, that knows how to put itself on a par with society, but we also ask for companionship within the communities. We want "priests to be truly brothers" and we aspire that, more and more, "the Church be where the people are".

11 We value Baptism as the starting point for being an active (synodal) member of the People of God and the parish - a privileged place of encounter, communion and mission - as the place where we can be formed as Church and practice synodality. We feel the common desire to be able to walk together as the People of God and at the same time we realize that living synodality is a historical urgency. In the encounter with the brother with whom we share our lives, we discover that we are called to walk together towards the Kingdom of God.

12 Synodality is much more than a parliament, it is being ready to discern in unity the will of God in the signs of the times. Life is a journey and must be discerned at all times, this implies transforming our pastoral ways to a more synodal style.

13 We express our desire to be co-responsible in an outgoing Church and to convert each of our parishes into a community of communities in a synodal key. We must assume co-responsibility in the mission, becoming aware of being protagonists, which is not only to be, but also to "become part of it".

14 It is important to build a synodal institutional model as an ecclesial paradigm of deconstruction of the pyramidal power that privileges unipersonal management. Because the only legitimate authority in the Church should be that of love and service, as the Lord did. The Gospel gives us a key: "Whoever wishes to be first must be the servant of all" (cf. Mk 10:44). This requires a process of conversion of heart in order to live synodality with audacity and freedom. The practice of synodal leadership, attentive to listening and creativity, encourages and fosters the formation of lay ministries. We are happy to note that where progress has been made in this modality, the process has led to a greater involvement of the different diocesan bodies, with more pastoral features, seeking to discern together and to accompany each other on the journey. This has made the people who are integrated into the activities of the Church feel welcomed. There is a renewed awareness of the need to implement or strengthen the functioning of the organs of community co-responsibility that exist in our Church, both at the diocesan and parish levels, such as the pastoral, administrative and economic councils.

15 We note that one of the main obstacles to synodality is the clericalist culture. This pending challenge is reflected in: struggle and abuse of power, infantilizing style of leadership, control and surveillance, institutional bureaucratization, authoritarian self-sufficiency, self-referentiality, superiority mentality, authority not at the service of the faithful, Church model centered on priests. It will not be possible to undo this ecclesial model if the seminaries and the already ordained ministers do not really and definitively opt to convert their mentality in order to be formed in the exercise of a synodal leadership. It is necessary to *"encourage and accompany the laity so that they assume a leading role as the people of God in participation and decision making"*. Clericalism, both of the clergy and of the laity, has come to be described as *"...an authority that scares and frightens"*. As an example it has been said: *"when there is a change of priest in a parish, instead of initiating a process of listening and knowledge of the history of the community, he allows the processes proper to the community dynamics to be extinguished or eliminated"*. We are all called to the conversion of clericalist behaviors, promoting in the leadership a style of participation and communion that makes the laity not merely obedient to orders but true actors and protagonists of evangelization. Particularly revaluing the leadership *"of women in the church, the spaces they occupy, their place in decision making"*.

16 We need more than ever a Catholic Church that grows in respect for other religious expressions. We must not fall into the practice of arrogance, believing ourselves to be the possessors of the truth, losing fraternal listening and with it charity, closing the doors to those who believe that the Catholic Church leaves them out. It would be a great change for society to see how we Christians meet and are more united. The unity of Christians would contribute greatly to the unity of the world, showing in deeds that we are pursuing the same goal: to love God and neighbor. We value positively the common activities of study, prayer and charity. To this end, it will be opportune to promote more ecumenical encounters with other Christian churches, emphasizing what unites us. A similar effort should be made in interreligious dialogue with other ways of living the sacred. In this regard, it seems to us fundamental to meet with the native peoples, possessors of a spirituality that has much to teach a civilization that is destroying the "common home". We value the great treasure of generosity and goodness that exists among non-believers or non-practicing people. Therefore, we urgently need to train agents for ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural relations.

17 *"Although we do not have sufficient experience of what discernment is and how we can carry it out in our communities, we understand that it is a sure way to open ourselves to the Spirit and to identify the steps we have to take."* We consider discernment not only as a method, but above all as a privileged lifestyle for making decisions in a synodal spirit. One community said: *"The Spirit helped us to become aware... that communal discernment is the greatest expression of a Synodal Church"*. Although this is clear from the conceptual point of view, it is recognized that from the practical point of view we must grow a lot in order to reach this model.

18 Discernment broadens our capacity to listen to the Spirit, to our neighbor and to reality. Sometimes we find it difficult to find the space to carry it out in our communities and we discern and make decisions as we go along and according to the possibilities of each person, of each group. For this reason we consider as very important the generation of spaces of dialogue and permanent consultation that obtain as fruit a more organic pastoral in synodal unity of all the People of God. The pastoral councils of the dioceses and parishes, for example, seem appropriate for this purpose and are a way of linking the synodal processes within the framework of pastoral plans.

19 We note that the diocesan pastoral assemblies are fraternal meetings in which the diocesan pastoral journey is discerned in community, open to all those who wish to participate: laity, priests, consecrated persons and representatives of movements and educational institutions of the various diocesan communities.

20 Although at times the instances of discernment may seem obscure, the listening

The prayerful hearing of the Word of God, which becomes an empathetic and affective listening to our brothers and sisters, especially the most distant, favors an attitude of discernment of the lived reality as a process that seeks to set the Church on the way out.

21 We are saddened that in some communities there is talk of institutional violence, gender violence, abuse of power, sexual abuse, as evils of society that also affect the Church, *"We find people with low self-esteem, spaces that are super-controlled and watched over by the same authorities who have been in power for years and do not allow themselves to be replaced, believing that they know everything, preventing us from being active and generating spaces to rethink the paradigms of my- sion."* In short, we note unresolved tensions that hinder the synodal journey.

22 We recognize the importance of formative spaces as moments to strengthen synodality, since being formed in it will help us to live it better. The call to be formed in synodality should include all members of the Church (bishops, priests, seminarians, lay men and women, consecrated men and women). It would be wrong to assume such formation. We find that we lack formation, ecological conversion, adequate and intensive use of CSMs as well as other means provided by technology. We believe that, in a special way, seminaries should be schools of synodality for future priests.

23 The spirituality of synodality is vital; it is a spirituality of closeness, welcome and service, in the style of our Mother, Mary, who allows herself to be impelled and guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in each one of us. This spirituality calls us to be family. It is important to discover the "confirmations" that God gives us, because God speaks in the community. We feel the presence of God, who embraces every reality and gives us the necessary gifts to put them at the service of the Church and society.

24 We perceive a desire to improve integration and communication within the Church, both among the ecclesial communities and with those who are distant from religious practice, while at the same time we note that there are brothers and sisters who are having difficulties, unable to feel integrated into the ecclesial community and are disillusioned. We want to look into the eyes, faces and hands of those around us and discover together with them the possibilities generated by walking together. Everyone is invited to express their faith journey, with its difficult circumstances, contributing to the life of the community without being hindered, judged or rejected by others.

25 We are attentive to value the different types of leadership within the Church so that hearts willing and eager to participate are not extinguished. Each one, according to different roles and services, is called to be a companion on the journey. We feel that synodality is a key to ecclesial identity and constitutes us as interlocutors of the Good News, for all, especially for the poorest and most suffering. In this sense, we see the need to accompany the faithful who are engaged in the world of politics, seeking to build a more just world.

26 It has been said that *"there is a lack of genuine spaces for young people and intergenerational meeting points"*. For this reason, young people and older adults are particularly relevant to us. In the former, their absence is generally noted, but at the same time, their participation when they are called upon to carry out solidarity tasks. In the case of the elderly, we see that they are gradually being left behind, despite the fact that they are often the majority population of our communities. For this reason, we commit ourselves not only to listen to and accompany young people and the elderly, but also to build, together with them, spaces and times that promote their active participation in our communities. We propose to *"seek ways to integrate young people and adults"*. We are equally concerned about people of all ages who are in vulnerable situations.

27 Cultural and social transformations are urgently challenging our mission,

In a special way: the new family constitutions, the LGBTQI+ community, people involved in problematic substance abuse and violence. Jesus did not stand in the way of including people. The Church must be even more open to diversity, both in listening and in pastoral action. We hear people from the LGBTQI+ community ask themselves: "*Has God stopped loving me because I am different? Can I not be part of the Church because I am different? Does Jesus Christ not include me in the group for whom he gives his life?*" We recognize that we need to grow also in the inclusion of "*other groups such as those separated in new union, marginalized youth, people deprived of their freedom, those who do not participate or are not interested, the elderly, people who are in favor of abortion, addicts and their families and in general those who live and/or think differently*".

28 We communities are enriched when we recognize the poorest among us as active subjects in the evangelizing process and not only as passive recipients of charity: each community is called to open its community life to them. Among "the poorest" we place emphasis on children and young people who are in vulnerable situations. The Lord Jesus manifests himself especially in those broken *Christs* in the family and in the community.

29 In most of the reports of the dioceses of Argentina, it is pointed out that, although women are the numerical majority in the communities and in the animation of pastoral activities such as catechesis, Caritas, pastoral care, liturgy, etc., very few of them are in the places where decisions are made. In this regard, there is a strong call for lay women or women with some form of consecration to participate in decision-making in parish and diocesan communities.

III... FOR MISSION AND DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD (5 and 6)

30 **Main ideas.** Synodality is at the service of the Church's mission, in which all members are called to participate. Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also allows for mutual understanding.

31 God sees reality and does not ignore it. For him, history, with its web of lives, its problems and challenges, its pains and hopes, is "*sacred ground*" and he invites us to take charge, going out to meet our brothers and sisters in our provinces and neighborhoods.

32 The Spirit impels us to be a Church going forth to announce the Good News of Jesus to all those who seek it with a sincere heart. He asks us to be open to surprise and creativity, to appreciate the *seeds of the Word* spread in all areas of society. We want to express closeness, joy and accompaniment, in order to communicate the essence of the Gospel proclamation.

33 We have seen that the capacity for dialogue within the Church is closely linked to the Church's capacity for dialogue with society. The weakening of this capacity in our pastoral practice has as a consequence that many people do not find in the Church the response they expect. Dialogue means seeking ways of inclusion.

34 We want to grow within our communities in the desire to go out, open ourselves and go to meet the pains and wounds that we observe. During the synodal listening, a person deprived of his freedom told us that he wanted to be received "as Jesus received me here in prison. He embraced me, he consoled me, he showed me his love. We would like to listen more to the young people, to the

minorities and the excluded, giving the possibility of participation, creating environments for this to be possible. It is important that the laity take the initiative, in coordination with the ecclesiastical authorities, but without expecting them to decide everything.

35 A sign of synodality is the openness to social changes and the desire to build bridges and discover networks that unite us to the human and existential peripheries. We see as a difficulty the ecclesial bureaucratization to solve particular situations and, sometimes, the increase of requirements for the reception of the sacraments of initiation.

36 We are pained by the growing hostility towards the Church, sometimes unfounded and other times based on sexual or economic scandals or on partial interpretations of statements or attitudes of the Pope. This makes it difficult for us to dialogue with other sectors of society.

37 We understand that synodality is at the service of the mission, which is the common responsibility of all the baptized, with the intention of loving and serving. It is to walk united, in plurality, listening first of all to the Spirit, who allows us to listen to each other as believers and to the world. We must go out in search of all our brothers and sisters and not just wait for them to approach. We do not forget the intimate connection between the parish and the neighborhood. We believe that the spheres of politics, economy and society are also conducive for the Church to reach out with its missionary accompaniment.

38 We feel called to prepare ourselves and give ourselves to an effective and affective action at the service of human development. Synodality invites us to be more ecclesial and not to close ourselves up in internal discussions, not to separate ourselves from daily life and to take charge of the fragility of the Church and the world. It is a strong call to the renewal and conversion of attitudes and community and personal structures, urging us to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and to a necessary coherence between faith and life. To live the closeness with every reality of vulnerability, listening, accompanying and generating the encounter.

39 We propose to generate more spaces for prayer, deepening and spiritual formation, to become more aware of the historical and cultural change in which we are inserted, and to go out with more humility and synodal decision, abandoning outdated structures.

40 Authentic communication facilitates communion both inside and outside the Church. We notice that many times we are not connected and do not work in a network. Improving in this aspect supposes having greater fraternity among pastoral groups, greater presence of pastors among the laity; getting closer to the sick, lonely people, families, grandparents, etc., in short, a dialogue with those who seem more distant from the Church. In the search for an ever more effective proclamation, it is urgent to train ourselves in the understanding and handling of the traditional means of communication and the new network technologies.

41 We propose to have an ecclesial presence in the peripheries and to redesign diocesan structures for this purpose, promoting and strengthening mutual listening with social referents. This implies living evangelical freedom and feeling that Jesus is the master of our heart. We need a change in language, creative and attractive actions, physical spaces and inclusive activities to promote integration in diversity.

42 The various charitable actions carried out to help our poorest brothers and sisters should seek to foster human promotion. This closeness must be expressed by opening up the physical spaces of the Church. We have experienced that when there is openness to the needs of the most fragile, the community grows and the bonds within the community and with the neighborhood are strengthened. All that the Church does for the poorest is valued.

IV FROM THE SHARED CELEBRATION, AS A SYNODAL EXPRESSION OF FAITH (4)

43 **Main idea.** "Walking together" is possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist, always enriched by an adequate inculturated liturgical renewal.

44 As the People of God we walk joyfully with all peoples and we want to be witnesses of God's love for all without distinction. "*We carry this treasure in earthen vessels*" (2 Cor. 4:7), aware of our weakness, and for this reason our missionary spirit is sustained by our encounter with God in prayer, meditation on the Word and, fundamentally, participation in the Eucharist. Our witness of charity, imperfect of course, is nourished by the altar and returns to it. We especially value the prayer of the Holy Rosary and Eucharistic Adoration. Therefore, it seems important to us to generate spaces of encounter with the Word and Eucharistic adoration, to promote the ministry of music, the preparation of the laity for the celebration of the Word, and Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, especially in rural areas.

45 We feel called to be creative and fraternal in our celebrations of faith, incorporating nuances proper to our regional culture, in order to imbue "*our city with the new life of Jesus and the joy of the Holy Spirit*". "Prayer brings us into communion with the Father, who is always ready to listen to us and enter into dialogue with us unconditionally.

46 The same journey together invites us to assume the evangelical values that are manifested in popular piety. In some of our provinces, this piety generates meeting places that gather a multitude of pilgrims and sacramental celebrations. We have the examples of the Tinkunaco, the pilgrimages to Marian shrines scattered throughout the country, the saints who are considered mediators and in whom the simple people place their trust, such as, for example, Saint Cajetan, to whom we ask for peace, bread and work. We should not consider them only as "social events", much less as a "second rate" religiosity, because - as Pope Francis teaches - "*The expressions of popular piety have much to teach us and, for those who know how to read them, they are a **theological place** to which we must pay attention, especially when thinking about the new evangelization*". (EG 126)

CONCLUSIONS

Next steps

47 The synodal process helped us to wake up. The preparation of the contributions to the Synod 2021-2023 has generated in itself a dynamism of participation through teams convened *ad hoc* and also counted, in many cases, with the service of the Pastoral and Presbyteral Councils of each diocese. These pages can hardly express the richness of the life committed and the task undertaken: consultations with priests, the consecrated life, the faithful who participate in parishes, Catholic schools, movements and associations; but also the search (often groping) to listen to those who walk our streets, those who live in rural areas or popular neighborhoods, people who are sick or deprived of their freedom, young people, among others. What is not reflected in these lines also illuminates the path of each diocese.

48 Diocesan reports have expressed that pre-synodal modes of ecclesiality enrich or hinder the current synodal journey. A few express a certain lack of confidence or resistance. But for the great majority, the experience of listening, of walking together and of shared celebration in this process has been a source of joy, of encounter and renewal, giving rise to new spaces of ecclesial and missionary experience.

49 Sometimes there is a bitter taste of not having reached everyone or of not having been able to sustain the process as they would have wished: the pandemic with its consequences of isolation, illness and the pain of losing family and friends, made some synodal experiences difficult.

50 If we had to point out the most important themes of the synthesis, we would point out the following (the order could change): **listening, dialogue** and **inclusion** are claims to live within and outside the Church, as crucial needs of this time. Another fundamental issue is **clericalism**, which makes us think of the management of power in the Church as an issue that merits study, conversion and change in the ecclesial culture. A third strong issue, which is related to power and co-responsibility, is the **protagonism of women in the Church**: this is a question of justice and is also a strong demand in the communities. A fourth topic is that of **celebrations**, which are expected to be more festive, meaningful and inculturated, taking up saints, devotions, symbols and expressions of the different regions of our country. A fifth topic is that of **formation**: a new ecclesial paradigm is emerging for which neither the laity nor the ordained ministers are trained to carry out. Sixthly, there is the question of **young people**; the communities experience that we do not know how to receive them or that young people do not approach us because they do not perceive the welcome they expect. Finally, we must mention the theme of **synodal spirituality**, trans- versal to all the previous ones, understood as the spirit that encourages us to renew ourselves and make the necessary changes to live a Church more similar to the proposal of Jesus.

51 However, despite the difficulties, the meeting spaces, assemblies and diocesan synods show a Church that dreams of being more evangelical and wants to recognize God who makes himself present in the daily life of our history, who embraces every reality and gives us the necessary gifts to put them at the service of the Church and society. For this reason we can say that both when the Synod helped us to discover our strengths and when it illuminated our weaknesses in the living, transmission and commitment of the faith, it was a reason for thanksgiving.

52 We dream of a *more synodal* Church, more missionary, that can *solve the lack of listening and participation, walking together*. By involving the people, the synodal experience is a joy in itself. It requires a spiritual, intellectual and pastoral conversion, because holiness is the horizon of synodality.

53 *The synodal journey is a slow one and it is often difficult for us to accept the necessary changes that we discover or glimpse in listening to the Holy and faithful People of God. For this reason, we want to renew our trust in the Lord who is drawing near and, looking to Mary, we want to renew our hope. Like her, we too seek to keep and meditate on this synodal journey in our communities, to go out to meet others and to proclaim that only by opening ourselves to His loving presence can we be reborn once again and proclaim Him with joy.*