



THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYNOD

TOWARDS THE ASSEMBLIES 2027-2028

Stages, criteria and tools for preparation

[Original text: Italian]

RECOLLECTING
INTERPRETING
ORIENTING
CELEBRATING

Gathering the Church in order to reread together what has taken place and to share the wonders worked by the Lord is a practice rooted in the experience of the return from mission narrated in the Gospel: after having been sent out two by two, “The seventy-two returned rejoicing” (Lk 10,17), recounting what the Lord had accomplished through them.

Later, the apostolic Church took up this same practice, as we read in the *Acts*: “When we reached Jerusalem the brothers welcomed us warmly. The next day, Paul accompanied us on a visit to James, and all the presbyters were present. He greeted them, then proceeded to tell them in detail what God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry” (Acts 21,17–19; cf. also Acts 14,27 and Acts 15,4.12).

The synodal journey of the coming years draws inspiration from these accounts, as an opportunity to **gather the People of God**, to **contemplate together the work that God continues to accomplish** among us, to **share its fruits**, and to **give thanks**. The Churches thus gathered will be able to experience the exchange of gifts, taking up another fundamental spiritual dynamic attested in the New Testament (cf. Rom 15,26-27), proposed anew by the Council (cf. *LG* 13 and 23; *AG* 38; *PO* 6, 7 and 10), and strongly reaffirmed by the *Final Document* (FD) of the 2021-2024 Synod (cf. especially nos. 120-123).

The Assemblies of 2027-2028, to whose preparation this text is dedicated, are situated within the implementation phase of the Synod. This constitutes the third moment of the process outlined by the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio*, following the consultation and listening to the People of God (2021-2023) and the celebratory phase, which culminated in the two sessions of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023 and October 2024. With the presentation of the *Final Document*, Pope Francis opened this new stage, which was subsequently confirmed and promoted by Pope Leo XIV. The *Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod* (29 June 2025, [available on](#)

www.synod.va) further outlined the horizon and style of this journey, offering criteria and initial orientations.

The indications offered here are intended to help give more concrete form to the process already underway, by specifying the involvement of the local Churches and of the different spheres of ecclesial communion. **The implementation phase does not introduce additional tasks alongside the ordinary life of communities; rather, it orients and renews that life from within.** It invites communities to experiment with more synodal practices and forms of ecclesial life, to assess their fruits, and to share them, within a dynamic of exchange among the Churches that nourishes communion and sustains mission. Within this horizon, the meaning of the Assemblies announced in the *Pathways* becomes clear: they are not isolated events, but significant moments within a broader process of discernment, conversion, and growth that will culminate in the Ecclesial Assembly of 2028.

The Assemblies planned for the coming years **constitute a decisive step in the implementation of the Synod.** As already highlighted in the *Pathways*, this is not a matter of adding a formal stage or of repeating what has already been experienced in the analogous phases of the 2021-2024 Synod, but of helping the Churches to transform the experience gained into shared wisdom. What is at stake is not simply the continuity of a process, but its maturation.

The intention is at once simple and demanding: to recognize what the Holy Spirit has caused to grow, to understand the difficulties that still mark the journey, and to identify, with realism and trust, the steps to be taken. In this sense, the Assemblies are not a technical review, but occasions for discernment, shared co-responsibility, and thanksgiving, within a process shared by the whole Church.

To preserve the unity of this process, a **common question is proposed to guide the work** at all levels, while leaving to each stage the task of articulating it according to its own context:

In light of the journey undertaken after the conclusion of the 2021-2024 Synod, and with a view to offering its fruits as a gift to the other Churches and to the Holy Father:

*what concrete form of a missionary synodal Church,
and what new paths of synodality,
are emerging in your community?*

This question invites a rereading, in a spirit of prayer, of the experience of implementing the *Final Document*: the practices initiated, the new beginnings,

the transformations underway, but also the difficulties encountered. At the same time, this question activates a narrative and communicative process among the Churches, helping them not to turn in upon themselves, but to situate what has been lived within a broader horizon of communion.

Objectives and perspectives

An evaluation (assessment) Assembly is **a spiritual process and a celebratory moment in which the threads of a communal journey of growth in synodality are drawn together**. Synodality is an essential dimension of the life of the Church, rooted in communion and ordered to mission. For this reason, the aim of the assessment process is the growth of the whole People of God in relationships and in fidelity to the Church's mission in the world, with particular attention to the participation of women, young people, the poor, and those who live on the margins of our communities.

In the Assemblies and in their preparation, it is not a matter of repeating the consultation stage of the Synod, but of **learning from the experience lived, recognizing the fruits and the difficulties, recalibrating priorities** and processes in the light of careful discernment, strengthening co-responsibility among ecclesial subjects, and fostering an authentic exchange of gifts among the Churches. In all this, it remains decisive to maintain a vigilant listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the light of the Word of God: indeed, the Assemblies do not coincide with a sociological consultation nor with a deliberative dynamic. The quality of prayer, listening, and sharing is more important than the quantity of materials produced, which are expected to be concise and focused.

In particular, the Assemblies are situated within broader ecclesial processes, which require adequate preparation time, the real involvement of communities and participatory bodies, and particular care in the sharing and communication of the fruits. The Assemblies do not exhaust the journey, but represent a moment of synthesis and renewed impetus: what is recognized and shared within them is intended to guide subsequent steps, to nourish dialogue among the Churches, and to sustain the continuity of the process of synodal missionary growth.

Responsibility and composition

Responsibility for the process belongs to the diocesan or eparchial bishop for diocesan and eparchial Assemblies, to the president of the Episcopal Conference for national or regional Assemblies, and to those responsible for continental bodies for Assemblies at that level. This responsibility is to be exercised in the spirit of what is affirmed in the *Final Document*, nos. 69 and 92, with the collaboration of participatory bodies and synodal teams, to which the organization and coordination of the work are entrusted. In this perspective, synodal teams are not simply operational structures, but bodies in which an experience of listening and co-responsibility has matured and must be preserved and further developed. For this reason, where this has not already been done, it is essential to reactivate and support diocesan, national, and continental synodal teams, and to communicate their composition to the General Secretariat of the Synod¹.

The **composition of the Assemblies** must be consistent with their purpose. It is not simply a matter of representing a Diocese or the Church of a country or region, but of ensuring the presence of persons who are familiar with the processes underway and who are capable of interpreting them theologically and pastorally. In the selection of participants, due attention should be given to the balance between men and women and among the different generations, to cultural and ecclesial diversity – including presbyters, deacons, consecrated women and men, members of associations, movements, and new communities, as well as faithful not belonging to organized structures – and to the presence of persons living situations of fragility or marginality. Particular care should be devoted to the involvement of parish priests. It is also important to value voices not directly traceable to ecclesial structures and, where appropriate, to provide for the participation of representatives of other Churches and Christian Communions or of other religions. The levels and modes of participation may vary according to cultural contexts, competencies, and experiences, but **it is essential that participants be willing to sustain the process also beyond 2028**, thus helping to ensure its continuity.

Since the number of participants in in-person meetings will necessarily be limited, provision should also be made for ways that enable the greatest possible number of the faithful to feel truly part of the process. For this purpose, online preparatory moments may be organized, and remote participation in some sessions may be made possible, including through streaming with translation where necessary. The materials produced during the process will be made

¹ The registration form for diocesan, national, and continental synodal teams is available at the following link: https://synod2024db.com/2025_synodal-teams-registration/

accessible, at least online. At the same time, the importance of in-person meetings should not be underestimated, even in the preparation phase, as irreplaceable places of mutual listening and shared discernment.

Calendar and tools

The calendar of the Assemblies follows what has already been indicated in the *Pathways*:

- first semester of 2027: diocesan and eparchial evaluation Assemblies
- second semester of 2027: national or regional evaluation Assemblies
- first four months of 2028: continental evaluation Assemblies;
- October 2028: Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican.

The concrete modalities of implementation will need to be adapted with prudence and freedom to the cultural, social, and also political conditions of the different contexts. From a methodological point of view, conversation in the Spirit remains the privileged point of reference, while allowing for the adaptations required by the specific needs of an assessment process at its different stages.

The reference texts for this journey remain, first and foremost, the ***Final Document*** of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops and the ***Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod***. It should also be recalled that the *Final Reports* of the Study Groups established after the First Session are currently being published and collected, as they become available, on a dedicated page of www.synod.va. These *Reports*, which offer elements for deeper reflection on certain issues relevant to ecclesial life, should be received and integrated as far as possible into the different phases of the journey, not as content to be applied, but as prompts that can illuminate the discernment underway and help situate it within a broader horizon.

In order to support the preparation adequately, further working materials will be made available and online formation meetings will be organized, aimed at clarifying objectives and contents and at accompanying those responsible in carrying out the process. More detailed information will be sent in due course. These tools are intended to foster informed participation and a coherent conduct of the Assemblies, in respect for the diversity of contexts and in the unity of the ecclesial journey.

Starting from this overall framework, some indications are now presented regarding the individual stages of the journey, so as to accompany their implementation more concretely, while maintaining **the need to adapt them**

with prudence and freedom to the specific features of each context. All those concerned are invited to give particular attention to the stage to which they are called to contribute or for which they bear specific responsibility; at the same time, a reading of the whole makes it possible to grasp more fully the unity and breadth of the process, fostering a more conscious and harmonious participation.

STAGES OF THE JOURNEY

RECOLLECTING

Stage of the local Churches (Dioceses and Eparchies)

INTERPRETING

Stage of the local Churches of an Episcopal Conference
(national or regional)

ORIENTING

Stage of the local Churches of each continent (or
continental region)

CELEBRATING

Ecclesial Assembly of the Church as a whole



THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYNOD

Stage of the local Churches (Dioceses and Eparchies)

- first semester of 2027 -

RECOLLECTING
INTERPRETING
ORIENTING
CELEBRATING

RECOLLECTING

*The one who sat on the throne said,
"Behold, I make all things new."
Then he said, "Write these words down,
for they are trustworthy and true." (Rev 21,5)*

The stage of the local Churches (Dioceses and Eparchies) takes place in the first half of 2027 as a time of remembering and discernment. It is not merely an exercise of reconstruction, but an ecclesial act: **to gather and recognize what has taken place, to grasp its meaning, and to allow what is beginning to emerge to come to light.** In this context, remembering does not mean looking to the past, but reading the present in the light of the action of the Holy Spirit in history and in the life of communities. The horizon of the work at this stage is primarily **narrative**.

At this stage, the local Church is first called **to gather and bring into relationship the experiences that have been initiated:** new forms of missionary presence, practices of co-responsibility, paths of listening, transformations in decision-making processes, and reforms of structures. It is a matter of narrating, bringing to light dynamics, passages, and learnings, while bearing in mind the threefold ecclesial conversion highlighted by the *Final Document*: the conversion of relationships, of decision-making processes, and of the bonds among the Churches and with their territories. Within this perspective, it will be important to hold together the personal and communal dimensions of conversion, without neglecting the level of structural reforms.

This stage unfolds through two closely connected and complementary moments.

- The first consists in **a spiritual rereading of the experience**, to be carried out before the Assembly, which makes it possible to gather, order, and bring

into focus what has been lived in the different areas. The fruit of this work will be the narrative report.

- The second moment is **the Assembly itself**, in which this initial elaboration is received, shared, and interpreted in an organic way: it is here that, through mutual listening and common discernment, a deeper understanding of the journey matures and the essential elements to be preserved and carried forward are identified.

Both moments are directed as much toward the internal growth of the community as toward communication with the other local Churches: what has matured is recognized and offered as a contribution to a broader ecclesial journey. For this reason, the Assembly will also be an opportunity to write a Letter to the other Churches in order to share with them the most significant fruits of the assessment process.

A. The narrative report

The starting point of this stage consists **in a careful and well-structured rereading of the journey undertaken**. The point of departure is the central question that guides the entire process, articulated within the concrete context of the Diocese or Eparchy:

In light of the journey undertaken after the conclusion of the 2021-2024 Synod, and with a view to offering its fruits as a gift to the other Churches and to the Holy Father: what concrete form of a missionary synodal Church, and what new paths of synodality, are emerging in your community?

In the light of this question, the task is to examine how the *Final Document* of the Synod has been implemented, what processes have been initiated, what transformations are underway, what difficulties have emerged, and what perspectives are coming into view.

In order to support this work and help make it concrete, the *Pathways* suggest a number of areas in which the local Churches may question themselves in order to recognize steps of reception and development:

- promotion of a synodal spirituality (cf. FD, nos. 43-46) and of a liturgy lived in a synodal key (cf. FD, no. 27);

- fostering of ministries and charisms; access by lay faithful to leadership roles that do not require the Sacrament of Orders and to other ecclesial responsibilities (cf. FD, nos. 60, 75-77);
- practice of ecclesial discernment (cf. FD, nos. 81-86), decision-making processes in a synodal style (cf. FD, nos. 93-94), and the functioning of participatory bodies in a synodal style (cf. FD, nos. 103-106);
- development of practices of transparency, accountability, and evaluation (cf. FD, nos. 95-102);
- missionary renewal of parishes and local communities (cf. FD, nos. 117-119);
- bonds among neighbouring Dioceses, within regions, and across countries (cf. FD, no. 124);
- synodal style in ecumenical relations (cf. FD, nos. 137-138);
- synodal style in interreligious relations (cf. FD, no. 123);
- synodal style in organized presence within society (education, culture, human promotion, hospitality, healthcare, etc.; cf. FD, no. 118) and in the promotion of peace, justice, and care for our common home (cf. FD, nos. 47-48, 121);
- formation activities in synodality (cf. FD, nos. 143-151) and the synodal character of the paths of Christian Initiation (cf. FD, no. 142); - etc.

This list, which is not exhaustive, is intended as an aid so that relevant dimensions of the experience are not overlooked. Each local Church is invited to give privileged attention to the areas that are most significant in its own context, **without any obligation to address them all**. In any case, it is essential that the rereading not focus exclusively on the internal life of the Christian community, but keep open the missionary perspective: **in what way has the experience of implementing the Synod contributed, and how can it contribute, to making the Church more capable of proclaiming the Gospel in the concrete situations of human and social life?**

To facilitate this process, an outline for drafting the narrative report will be sent in the coming months. It should be noted from now that the text may be accompanied by brief contributions (indicatively one page each) dedicated to specific experiences considered significant to share, including those that did not produce the expected results: these too can offer valuable elements for learning.

Responsibility for coordinating the drafting of the report will ordinarily be entrusted to the synodal team, which will work in collaboration with the persons and bodies involved in the various areas of ecclesial life, **under the final responsibility of the Bishop, to whom final approval belongs**. Should the Bishop see the need for changes or amendments, he will return the

text to the team, giving the reasons for his observations. This work must be completed before the Assembly, and the report made available to participants sufficiently in advance.

B. The Assembly: overall rereading of the journey and letter to the other Churches

The Assembly constitutes the moment in which the analytical rereading is received, shared, and interpreted in the light of the experience of the diocesan or eparchial Church as a whole. **The narrative report serves as the starting point for the Assembly:** it is through mutual listening, exchange, and common prayer that a more integrated view of the journey undertaken can mature. Conversation in the Spirit, suitably adapted, remains the suggested methodological reference, in the awareness that ecclesial discernment is not the result of mediation among positions, but the fruit of a common listening to the Spirit.

The objective of the Assembly is not to produce a further synthesis document, but **to draft a brief letter**, addressed to the other local Churches throughout the world, in order to share, in a concise and communicative form, the principal fruits that have emerged in the process of implementing the Synod: what has been understood, what is seen as promising, and what remains open.

This letter – of limited length – has a value that goes beyond simple reporting. It is an act of ecclesial communication that makes it possible to participate in the exchange of gifts among the Churches, offering one's own experience while opening oneself to that of others. An outline for drafting the letter will also be sent.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, both the narrative report and the letter will be transmitted to the national (or regional) synodal team, as a contribution to the subsequent stage of discernment, and shared with the General Secretariat of the Synod **by 30 June 2027**.

IN SUMMARY

During the Stage of the local Churches, two distinct and complementary contributions are prepared: **in view of the Assembly**, a narrative report, gathering in an articulated way the spiritual, theological, and pastoral rereading of the experience in the various areas considered; **during the Assembly**, a letter to the other Churches, presenting in concise form the overall meaning of the journey and the principal fruits gathered.

In this twofold exercise – directed first toward the life of the diocesan or eparchial ecclesial community and then outward –, under the final responsibility of the Bishop, the quality of this stage is at stake. It is not only a matter of understanding more fully what has taken place, but of recognizing together what the Spirit is bringing to birth and sharing it as a gift for the journey of the Church as a whole.



THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYNOD

Stage of the local Churches of an Episcopal Conference (national or regional)

- second semester of 2027 -

RECOLLECTING
INTERPRETING
ORIENTING
CELEBRATING

INTERPRETING

*“Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives [...].
Write down, therefore, what you have seen,
and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards.
This is the secret meaning of the seven stars
you saw in my right hand,
and of the seven gold lampstands:
the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches,
and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” (Rev 1,17-20)*

Within the process, the stage of the local Churches of an Episcopal Conference constitutes a time of sapiential and theological interpretation. After the work of rereading and narration carried out by the Dioceses or Eparchies, a further step is now called for: **to receive the fruits shared by the Dioceses and Eparchies, to bring them into relationship with one another, and to allow their broader ecclesial meaning to emerge.** This is the moment in which local experiences, without losing their concreteness, are taken up within a wider perspective, capable of identifying common dynamics, convergences and tensions, and perspectives that concern the life of the Church in a given territory as a whole.

In general, **the principal actors of this stage are the Churches belonging to the same Episcopal Conference**, which, at this step of the process, constitutes the ordinary point of reference for discernment and the work of elaboration. However, where circumstances suggest it, this stage may also be carried out in ecclesial regions of more limited scope (such as Ecclesiastical Provinces) or in broader regions, bringing together countries that share particularly homogeneous cultural, social, or pastoral contexts, (as happens, for example, in some regions of Africa or Europe). In this perspective, the Churches gathered in CEAMA (the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon) are likewise invited

to develop a specific path of their own, which will then feed into the broader elaboration of the Churches of Latin America. Dioceses or Eparchies that do not belong to an Episcopal Conference are invited to identify the grouping of Churches with which it would be particularly fruitful to carry out this stage, by reason of cultural, social, or pastoral proximity.

Under the continuing responsibility of the President of the Episcopal Conference, the synodal teams are called to coordinate this phase, working in collaboration with the competent bodies, commissions, and persons at the national or regional level, while also involving, in an appropriate way, experts and representatives of diocesan or eparchial synodal teams.

This stage too is structured in two distinct and complementary moments. The first is dedicated to a focused rereading of certain specific aspects, including through the preparation of thematic worksheets, which will lead to **the drafting of a theological-pastoral report**; the second is centered on the Assembly, which is called to formulate a shared interpretation of the journey undertaken and to communicate its fruits to the other Churches through **a letter**.

A. The theological-pastoral report

The first step of this stage involves **the preparation of thematic worksheets** that make it possible to order and bring into focus what has been lived and initiated in the different areas of ecclesial life. The work consists in gathering and reworking what emerges from the contributions of Dioceses and Eparchies (narrative reports and letters) by preparing all the following thematic worksheets:

1. Promotion of a synodal spirituality (cf. FD, nos. 43-46) and of a liturgy lived in a synodal key (cf. FD, no. 27)
2. Fostering of ministries and charisms; access by lay faithful to leadership roles that do not require the Sacrament of Orders and to other ecclesial responsibilities (cf. FD, nos. 60, 75-77)
3. Practice of ecclesial discernment (cf. FD, nos. 81-86), decision-making processes in a synodal style (cf. FD, nos. 93-94), and the functioning of participatory bodies in a synodal style (cf. FD, nos. 103-106)
4. Development of practices of transparency, accountability, and evaluation (cf. FD, nos. 95-102)
5. Missionary renewal of parishes and local communities (cf. FD, nos. 117-119)

6. Bonds among neighbouring Dioceses, within regions, and across countries (cf. FD, no. 124)
7. Synodal style in ecumenical relations (cf. FD, nos. 137–138)
8. Synodal style in interreligious relations (cf. FD, no. 123)
9. Synodal style in organized presence within society (education, culture, human promotion, welcome, healthcare, etc.; cf. FD, no. 118) and in the promotion of peace, justice, and care for our common home (cf. FD, nos. 47-48, 121)
10. Formation activities in synodality (cf. FD, nos. 143-151) and the synodal character of the paths of Christian Initiation (cf. FD, no. 142)

Other worksheets invite a rereading of specific issues that are more clearly evident in the dynamics of groupings of Churches:

11. Formation in synodality in Seminaries (cf. FD, no. 142)
12. Synodal style and formation in synodality in theological Faculties and institutions (cf. FD, no. 67)
13. Synodal style of Episcopal Conferences and their structures (cf. FD, no. 125)
14. Participation of Consecrated Life and of Lay Associations in the synodal dynamism of the local Church (cf. FD, nos. 65, 118)

Through the preparation of these worksheets (for which a template will be provided in due course) the aim is to bring to light not only what has been accomplished, but above all **the dynamics running through the different areas, the criteria that are emerging, and the questions that call for further reflection**. Compared with the previous stage, the work required here involves a more explicit theological and pastoral interpretation of the experience. Once the thematic worksheets have been prepared, an introduction of a few pages will be drafted under the coordination of the synodal team, offering an overall theological-pastoral interpretation.

The introduction together with the thematic worksheets constitutes the theological-pastoral report. It gives an account of the principal dynamics that have emerged, the transversal questions that run across the different areas, and the perspectives opening up for the future journey. The report is a valuable resource, giving voice to the ecclesial awareness that has matured at the local level: it presents what has been received from the local Churches, encouraging them to situate their own journey within a broader and shared horizon, and it constitutes the point of departure for the work of the national (or regional) evaluation Assembly.

Furthermore, during this phase, the synodal teams will consider the most appropriate ways of publishing and disseminating the letters to the other Churches prepared by Dioceses and Eparchies, as a concrete sign of the journey undertaken and of the plurality of voices that have animated it.

B. The Assembly: overall rereading of the journey and letter to the other Churches

The national (or regional) evaluation Assembly is called to receive the various materials gathered (the theological-pastoral report, the narrative reports, and the letters to the Churches prepared by Dioceses or Eparchies) and to reread them in an organic way. The aim is not to offer a synthesis, but to allow a shared interpretation of the journey to emerge, capable of indicating what appears most significant for the present and for the future.

Concretely, the Assembly will be called to write a letter addressed to the local Churches and to the groupings of Churches throughout the world, in which the principal fruits of the journey will find expression in a concise and communicative form: what has been learned, what is recognized as promising, and the insights that can be offered as a contribution to the common path. As in the local stage, care in communication is an integral part of the process: it is through this exchange that the Churches grow together.

The theological-pastoral report and the letter will be made available to the continental synodal team as a contribution to the subsequent stage of the process, and shared with the General Secretariat of the Synod **by 31 December 2027**.

IN SUMMARY

The task of the Stage of the local Churches of an Episcopal Conference (national or regional) is to offer a theological-pastoral interpretation of the journey undertaken, capable of bringing experiences into relationship, illuminating them both in relation to one another and in the light of the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, with a view to a broader communication to the whole People of God in service of its mission.

Its work takes concrete form in the drafting of: **in view of the Assembly**, a theological pastoral report, comprising a series of worksheets addressing the

themes indicated and an introduction offering an overall interpretation; **during the Assembly**, a letter addressed to the other Churches of the world, sharing the principal fruits of the journey.

To these materials is added the ordered collection of the narrative reports and letters produced by the Dioceses or Eparchies.



THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYNOD

Stage of the local Churches of each continent (or continental region)

- first four months of 2028 -

RECOLLECTING
INTERPRETING
ORIENTING
CELEBRATING

ORIENTING

I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God)". (Rev 21,2-3)

Within the path of implementation of the Synod, the continental stage takes shape as a **step of orientation, capable of opening new perspectives**. After the rereading of the journey carried out by Dioceses and Eparchies, and the interpretation matured at the level of Episcopal Conferences (national or regional) a space opens in which the Churches of the different continents can recognize together the steps that the Holy Spirit is inviting them to take in the various areas highlighted. This step calls for a deeper listening to the ways in which the Spirit is at work in the experience and invites discernment of the dynamics underway in the light of the Word of God and the tradition of the Church, allowing criteria and orientations to emerge for the journey toward a missionary synodal Church capable of inhabiting the contemporary world.

The continents (or the continental regions) do not represent merely a geographical subdivision, but express cultural, social, and religious contexts marked by common dynamics: migratory processes, cultural transformations, political tensions, and changes in the ways of living the faith. The continent is not simply an intermediate synthesis, but a context in which the Churches can together recognize challenges that transcend national boundaries and call for shared responses.

The work of this stage will consist in gathering and analyzing the materials produced by the Stage of the local Churches of an Episcopal Conference (national or regional), together with the preparation of specific thematic worksheets (in particular on the synodal functioning of continental groupings of Churches). This will be followed by a more properly discernment-oriented moment, aimed at

preparing a “**perspective report**”: an overall rereading of the journey, capable of identifying emerging priorities and shared orientations. Communication with the Churches of other continents, with whom the principal fruits are to be shared, will be of fundamental importance. The results are to be transmitted to **the General Secretariat of the Synod by 30 April 2028**.

The specific aspects of this Stage and **the concrete modalities for carrying out the work will be further developed in dialogue with representatives of the different continents**, with a view to formulating more detailed indications and *ad hoc* support materials.

Within this same horizon, there will also be a dialogue within the Roman Curia on the implementation of the Synod. Its results, considered in relation to the fruits of the continental Assemblies, will foster a deeper integration between the discernment of the Churches and the service of the bodies of the Holy See.



THE PATH OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYNOD

Ecclesial Assembly of the Church as a whole

- October 2028 -

RECOLLECTING
INTERPRETING
ORIENTING
CELEBRATING

CELEBRATING

One of the seven angels who held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb". He took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendour of God. [...] The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and to it the kings of the earth will bring their treasure. (Rev 21,9-10.23-24)

The path of the Assemblies reaches its culminating moment in the Ecclesial Assembly of October 2028, through which the Church as a whole is called to **recognize, celebrate, and carry forward** the fruits that have matured along the path of implementing the Synod. More than a point of arrival, the Ecclesial Assembly takes shape as the moment in which the journey undertaken is brought into unity, opened to further developments, and entrusted to the discernment of the whole Church, under the responsibility of the Holy Father.

The modalities for the Ecclesial Assembly will be defined more precisely at a later stage. A dedicated *Instrumentum laboris* will propose the content and working method in the light of the journey undertaken.

A distinctive feature of this Stage is its celebratory dimension. The liturgies, in particular, will be called to make tangible what it means to be a missionary synodal Church: a people gathered by the Lord, attentive to the Word, capable of living communion and opening itself to mission. **The celebratory dimension will not concern only the event taking place in the Vatican:** each local Church will be invited to accompany it with analogous moments of celebration and sharing, and to sustain it with prayer, thus experiencing a form of universal communion.

Furthermore, during the Ecclesial Assembly of 2028, moments of exchange will be provided in order **to explore more deeply the thematic nuclei that have emerged throughout the process**, together with discernment groups composed of persons who have participated in the journey and of figures with specific expertise, called to reread the materials from different perspectives (ecclesial position, gender, generation, culture, and social context). Each group will be called to offer its contribution on the basis of the question that animates the entire process, suitably reformulated:

***what concrete form of a missionary synodal Church
and what new paths of synodality are emerging
as the fruit of the journey undertaken after the conclusion of the 2021-2024 Synod?***

The contributions thus gathered will be **offered to the Holy Father as the fruit of the process of discernment**.

In this Stage, therefore, **Eucharistic action and discernment** are intertwined: what has been lived is recognized as a gift, shared in joy, and entrusted to the responsibility of the whole Church, so that it may continue to generate life under the guidance of the Holy Father.

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