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Conferenza Stampa a conclusione della seconda tappa del processo sinodale 2021-2024: la Tappa Continentale

Intervento di S.E. Mons. Timothy John Costelloe, S.D.B.

Intervento della Rev.da Sr. Nathalie Becquart, X.M.C.J.,

Intervento del Rev. Mons. Lucio Adrián Ruiz

Intervento del Rev. Padre Hyacinthe Destivelle, O.P.

Alle ore 11.30 di questa mattina, presso la Sala Stampa della Santa Sede, Sala San Pio X, Via dell'Ospedale 1, ha avuto luogo una Conferenza Stampa a conclusione della seconda tappa del processo sinodale 2021-2024: la Tappa Continentale.

Sono intervenuti: S.E. Mons. Timothy John Costelloe, S.D.B., Arcivescovo di Perth e Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Australiana; Rev.da Sr. Nathalie Becquart, X.M.C.J., Sottosegretaria della Segreteria Generale del Sinodo; Rev. Mons. Lucio Adrián Ruiz, Segretario Generale del Dicastero per la Comunicazione; Rev. Padre Hyacinthe Destivelle, O.P., Ufficiale del Dicastero per la Promozione dell'Unità dei Cristiani.

Ne riportiamo di seguito gli interventi:

Intervento di S.E. Mons. Timothy John Costelloe, S.D.B.

Following on from Sr Nathalie's presentation of the journey we have undertaken so far, especially in regard to the Continental Stage, I would like to say a few words on the actual experience of the Continental Assemblies.

Although I only attended one of them, the Oceania Assembly, my understanding from speaking with those who attended others, and also from reading each of the Assembly documents, is that each Assembly was quite different in style and content. This was only to be expected, given the very different ecclesial and social contexts

in which the various Churches of each continent live.

This points to a very important aspect of synodality, especially as we think about it in the context of a global, a universal Church: there is more than one way of being the Church. One of the most important things we are experiencing on this journey into a greater and deeper experience of synodality is that we recognise and celebrate the great diversity which is already a reality in the Church; we are actually experiencing a profound unity which is not only not grounded on uniformity but actually invites us to abandon any search for a rigid uniformity. This points to the reality that universal principles have to be “incarnated” in the context of the local culture and situation. And this is a key point: there are universal principles (and there is a form of uniformity in this) but the principles must be incarnated in local contexts.

This was the case in the Oceania experience. Oceania is made up of a great variety of cultures (largely Western cultures marked by great cultural diversity and significant indigenous cultures, Polynesian, Macronesian, Micronesian and, within that, very particular island cultures). It is also a continent which contains both economically and politically stable nations, and other nations much less stable in either or both aspects. And further it is what we might call a “water continent” more than a land continent, in the sense that if we drew a circle on a map around all the nations that make up the Oceania continent, most of what would be contained in that circle would be the Pacific Ocean. And lastly it is a continent which contains a significant number of relatively young nations and young Churches.

All these factors taken together meant that, in practice, the ideal of a fully realised continental ecclesial assembly in Fiji was not possible. What was possible was that the great majority of bishops from Oceania were able to come together in Fiji, with a small but significant representative presence of the People of God. These people carried with them into the Fiji Assembly the voice of the People of God, as a last step in an organic ecclesial experience of receiving the results of the synodal hearing of the voice of the People of God throughout the world (the Frascati document) in order to recognise their own voice coming through the voice of the whole People of God as well as the challenges and invitations from the whole People of God to the People of God in Oceania.

This is, I think, a part of the Synodal journey: that we are led to recognise ourselves as an essential part of the reality of the Church - to attend to the echoes of our own experience, our own hopes and dreams, our own convictions about the Church, which we hear in the voices of the other continental assemblies, and at the same time be open to other dreams, other hopes and other convictions – and in all this to listen carefully and attentively, and expectantly, for the voice and the call of the Holy Spirit coming through all these voices: to find the harmony which is there, if we look carefully enough, in what at times might initially look like disharmony.

A key part of this process has been the practice of spiritual conversation, or conversation in the Spirit, in which each one is invited to speak openly and honestly of what he or she is discovering as life and faith unfolds, and equally to listen attentively and “non-defensively” to the other who also speaks. We are being invited to recognise each other as a fellow companion on the journey of life and faith and certainly not as antagonists or combatants. Certainly in the Oceania assembly this was crucial in creating a climate of respect, and I would say a presumption of goodwill and sincerity in the other, even if what the other was saying was challenging or confronting. And this in turn helps to create an attitude of openness to the other which makes it possible to consider that “there might be more to this or that issue than I have previously seen”. This opens a way forward for everyone.

St Nathalie was able to attend a number of the other assemblies so perhaps, St Nathalie, you might want to also reflect on this and also on the final documents which were the outcome of the Continental assemblies.

As you know the meetings which concluded yesterday were really focussed two things: a reflection on, and a sharing of impressions about, the experience of the continental stage of the synod journey, which really began with the publication of the document for the Continental Stage - “Enlarge the Space of your Tent” - and then on a careful reading of the seven documents which emerged from the continental assemblies, which sought to gather together the work of reflection and discernment which had been undertaken at the Continental level.

The process we followed was very similar to that we have used throughout this journey: conversations in the Spirit. We gave ourselves time to pray, to reflect on what we were reading, to speak openly with each other, and listen attentively to each other, in relation to what was emerging and then to begin to discern together themes, and priorities and points of tension which can be offered as a contribution to the drafting of the *Instrumentum laboris*. In this sense the meetings of the last week or so have been conducted in such a way as to contribute to the ongoing journey of the synod. Our work represents a further step, but in no way the final step, in this journey.

One very important element is the week's meetings have been our encounter with the Prefects and/or general secretaries of some of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia. These encounters have been in themselves good examples of something at the heart of the synodal journey: open, honest attentive, and respectful speaking and listening. It is never good for people to operate "in a bubble": we need to come into this synodal journey with eyes, ears and hearts that are open. This was certainly my experience of the time we were able to spend with the members of the dicasteries.

Perhaps I might conclude with a simple reflection on what comes next. From now until the First Assembly begins in October the synodal journey, hopefully, will continue to unfold at the grass-roots level. We have a wealth of material which all forms part of our journey together. We have the all the praying, sharing and reflecting which went on in communities of all kinds right across the world. And all of this was brought together in the documents which came, primarily though not only, through the agency of the bishops Conferences. From these emerged the Document for the continental stage (the Frascati document) which itself was given back to the local Churches, that is to the whole Church, for further and deeper reflection at a continental level. As we now begin to look with anticipation to the next stage of the journey, the First Assembly in October, I would hope that at the local level of parish, of diocese, of religious community, of Church agency, the reflection, through the practice of Spiritual conversation, around all of this material and in a particular way around the Documents from the seven Continental assemblies, would continue. The more we are able to deepen our understanding of what the Church has done so far in this synodal journey launched by Pope Francis, the better placed will we be to continue to accompany each other as the journey unfolds. But if we stand on the sidelines we could well miss the opportunity that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus didn't miss: the opportunity to have Jesus join us on the journey, listen to us and speak with us, and cause our hearts to burn within us. The synodal journey has the potential to light a fire within our hearts that will become a source of the energy, enthusiasm, courage and trusting faith that we will need to become the missionary Church Pope Francis is dreaming of.

[00629-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Intervento della Rev.da Sr. Nathalie Becquart, X.M.C.J.

1. The Continental Stage

This continental stage that we are concluding is one of the most innovative aspect of the synodal process.

To open the Continental Stage last October 28, the General Secretariat has published a Document for the Continental Stage that has been written after careful reflection on the fruits of the first stage from syntheses of all of the Episcopal Conferences of the Universal Church, as well as the Eastern Churches, and groups such as Religious Institutes, Lay Movements and so on. This Document was the support of the Continental Stage consisting of a time of listening and discernment of all of the People of God and of all local Churches on a continental basis, leading to a series of 7 continental assemblies.

With the idea of circularity among all levels of the Church and the vision of a dialogical Movement that characterize synodality, the perspective of the Continental stage was a deepening of that discernment process by the people identified to represent the local Churches in the pre-assembly processes prior to each Continental Assembly.

To take into account the diversity of the experience and ways of proceeding of the continental ecclesial bodies

that were in charge of the organization of the continental assemblies – FABC for Asia, CELAM for Latin America, USCCB and CCCB for North America, APEC for Middle-East, SECAM for Africa, CCEE for Europe and FCBCO for Oceania, It was proposed to have a flexible approach with common guidelines given by our Continental Task-Force – for example the request to use the methodology of spiritual conversation in all assemblies and to have an ecclesial assembly with the diversity of the People of God - and differences in approach by each continental task-force settled for each continent that takes account of the established practices, cultural and language elements, geography, and logistics of each continent.

The current synodal process, through the effective integration of the various levels of synodality and their articulation in a circular dynamic of listening, dialogue and discernment, is highlighting the necessity, the specificity but at the same time the interaction between the exercise of synodality at the local, regional, national, continental and universal levels. The continental stage intended to encourage the creation or strengthening of links of neighboring Churches and at the same time to foster relationships between the Universal Church and the Particular Churches. In this regard, in each continental assembly, some members of the General Secretariat came to take part in this “walking together” in a spirit of listening and learning from the experience of the Continental Assemblies for the next stage of the Synod.

2- the experience of the continental assemblies

- The centrality of the experience beyond the documents

Need and fruits to gather together, especially when the issues are huge

Example of the Assembly of Middle-East in Lebanon just after the earthquake in Turkey and Syria

A spiritual process of transformation that led to consolation. Joy and frustration, step by step.

The impact of synodality : listening, parrhesia freedom of speech, communion and solidarity, more closeness, empowerment. At the end of the assembly of Middle East a patriarch : “listening to this young people, women who really love the church and share their thoughts and idea, really gives me new energy and hope”

- The blessing of taking part to 4 continental assemblies: the experience of the beauty of the diversity of the Church and the learning through this continental stage that diversity can also be a path to unity. Pluralism/polyhedron, multipolar world

- The joy of this new type of ecclesial assembly at the level of continents, the fruits of sharing together bishops, priests, lay men and women, religious ... and among different local churches. For some people in Africa coming to Addis Ababa in Etiopa for the first time they travelled out of their own country

- The synodal path as an exchange of gifts : the gift/charism of each continent highlighting more one important aspect for synodality : Care for Creation in Oceania, Ecumenism and liturgy in Middle-East, Church as Family of God and importance of listening in Africa. In each culture, contexts there are seeds of synodality and obstacles for synodality : for instance in some countries in Asia/Africa/Oceania the experience of Small Christian Communities, the traditional values of Africa Ubuntu, Family, Palaver, the emphasize on interiority and harmony in Asia, Interreligious dialogue and human fraternity with muslims in Middle East +

- the emphasize on local churches but with the increase phenomenon of migrations the fact that no longer any local church can think of herself only with native local catholics. New paradigm to integrate. I was particularly struck in the Assembly of Middle East by the experience of the Arabic Peninsula, the delegate from the Vicariate of Southern Arabia, A lay man from Abbu Dhabbi where they have done a wonderful synodal process: one parish 99 nationalities and 7 rites.

- How the participants in the synodal continental assembly were so touched to see “Rome coming to them” to

listen and just be with them in this synodal spirit of “walking together”, I realized more that it is really another experience to meet bishops and people in their own context or to meet them at the Vatican. A new way to relate between the center/roman curia and the local churches in the spirit of Predicate Evangelium

[00634-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Intervento del Rev. Mons. Lucio Adrián Ruiz

Contesto: 7 persone su 10 utilizzano un telefono cellulare, il 64% della popolazione mondiale è online e 4,5 miliardi di persone utilizzano i social network in tutto il mondo, quasi il 60%.

1- Che cos'è il "Sinodo digitale"?

È lo stesso Sinodo della Chiesa, con lo stesso obiettivo, con la stessa metodologia del resto della Chiesa, ma svolto negli “spazi digitali”.

È importante sottolineare che non è “digitale” perché sono stati utilizzati “strumenti digitali”, perché molte realtà li hanno utilizzati, ma per il *luogo* in cui si è svolto, per i *tempi*, per i *destinatari*, per il *linguaggio*, come è nato e per il *modo* in cui si è svolto, che è il modo in cui si vive lì, negli “spazi digitali”.

2- Com'è nato?

Viene dal Popolo di Dio stesso presente nelle reti. Sono stati i missionari digitali e gli evangelizzatori che, ascoltando la chiamata di Papa Francesco a tenere il Sinodo della Sinodalità, con l'obiettivo di ascoltare il Popolo di Dio, discernendo nello Spirito, hanno voluto realizzarlo per raggiungere tutte quelle persone che non partecipano alle istituzioni ecclesiali, ma che sono nelle reti e che vogliono seguire questo cammino della Chiesa. Perciò si è verificata come esperienza missionaria.

3- Chi ha partecipato?

Da un lato, i missionari ed evangelizzatori digitali e gli *influencer* cattolici, che sono quelle persone, soprattutto giovani, ma non solo, che sentono la chiamata all'evangelizzazione e alla missione nelle reti e negli spazi digitali, e lì sviluppano la loro vocazione cristiana, aiutando, accompagnando, predicando, donando il loro tempo a chi ne ha bisogno. Sono molto diversi tra loro per stili, sensibilità e modi di portare avanti la missione. Nella prima fase, realizzata in 2 mesi e mezzo, hanno partecipato 250 missionari digitali, oggi sono più di 1000.

Dall'altro lato, ci sono coloro che li seguono, i *follower*, che sono persone che vogliono coltivare la loro fede, che vogliono saperne di più, o che hanno un primo approccio alla fede... c'è chi ha bisogno di aiuto, chi ha dei dubbi, insomma, la ricchezza e la varietà di quello che è il Popolo di Dio nel mondo. La particolarità è che non sono legati a lingue, culture o luoghi.

4- Chi è stato raggiunto?

Una popolazione ampia, di tutte le età, specialmente fra i 18 e 40 anni, e soprattutto una grande popolazione giovanile. Tra questi il 30% non credenti o lontani dalla Chiesa, interessati a questo cammino. Nella prima fase abbiamo ricevuto 150.000 questionari compilati, in 115 Paesi, in 7 lingue. Il potenziale di questi missionari digitali è di 20.000.000 di followers.

I giovani hanno trovato una dinamica, in termini di tempi, forme e metodologie, più consona a loro. I non credenti e i lontani dalla Chiesa hanno trovato un percorso di avvicinamento e dialogo che ha permesso loro di

esprimersi e avvicinarsi in modo più libero.

5- Conclusioni principali?

- La realtà digitale, e la realtà comunicativa in generale, non sono semplicemente uno strumento, ma una cultura. Perché gli strumenti vengono solo “usati”, la cultura, invece, viene evangelizzata, missionata e la Chiesa inculturata.

- Abbiamo scoperto tanti missionari ed evangelizzatori negli ambienti digitali, che svolgono un lavoro molto importante con tutti i tipi di persone; hanno bisogno di essere accompagnati, aiutati, sostenuti e formati, per poter vivere la loro fede e accompagnare i loro followers, e così “camminare insieme” nel mondo, che è uno, oggi presenziale e digitale.

[00632-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Intervento del Rev. Padre Hyacinthe Destivelle, O.P.

Se il cammino ecumenico si intende come uno “scambio di doni”, allora uno dei doni che i cattolici potrebbero forse ricevere dagli altri cristiani è proprio la loro esperienza sinodale. È con questa convinzione che il Dicastero per la promozione dell'unità dei cristiani ha proposto alla Segreteria generale del Sinodo di organizzare conferenze sulla sinodalità nelle diverse tradizioni cristiane. Queste conferenze sono state volute come un contributo ecumenico al processo sinodale in corso, soprattutto per la sua fase continentale.

Con l'aiuto dell'Istituto di Studi Ecumenici dell'Angelicum e della Fondazione Pro Oriente di Vienna, sono dunque state organizzate quattro conferenze internazionali nel 2022 e 2023, incentrate sulla comprensione e sulla pratica della sinodalità nelle quattro grandi tradizioni cristiane: ortodossi, ortodossi orientali, protestanti storici e nuove realtà ecclesiali.

La metodologia di queste conferenze era essa stessa sinodale. Basate sull'ascolto, sono state intitolate “Listening to the East” e “Listening to the West”. Più di cento teologi, storici e canonisti dalle diverse tradizioni cristiane e provenienti da vari continenti sono stati invitati a presentare l'esperienza sinodale delle loro Chiese, in particolare sui tre temi principali del sinodo in corso: comunione, partecipazione, e missione.

Il ruolo dei teologi cattolici invitati, professori di diversi paesi e membri della Segreteria generale del Sinodo, era quello di ascoltare. Alla fine di ogni giornata, alcuni di loro, chiamati “Catholic listeners”, hanno riassunto ciò che avevano percepito e ciò che, secondo loro, potrebbe imparare la Chiesa cattolica. Una sintesi di questi riassunti è stata inviata alla Segreteria del Sinodo e sarà tra breve pubblicata insieme agli atti delle conferenze dalla *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

La conclusione principale forse si trova in una frase pronunciata dal Santo Padre precisamente a proposito di queste conferenze: “Il cammino della sinodalità, che la Chiesa cattolica sta percorrendo, è e dev'essere ecumenico, così come il cammino ecumenico è sinodale”. Da un lato *il cammino della sinodalità è ecumenico*, perché la sinodalità è una sfida che deve essere affrontata con gli altri cristiani. Dall'altro lato, *il cammino ecumenico è sinodale*, perché l'ecumenismo è innanzitutto un *syn/odos*, un pellegrinaggio fatto insieme agli altri cristiani.

In altre parole, si può dire non solo che il movimento ecumenico contribuisce al processo sinodale in corso, in tutte le sue fasi, ma anche che il processo sinodale della Chiesa cattolica è un contributo al movimento ecumenico. La sinodalità e l'ecumenismo sono infatti due cammini che hanno un comune obiettivo: una migliore testimonianza dei cristiani oggi, “affinché il mondo creda” (Gv 17,21).

[00630-EN.01] [Original text: English]

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