



Synod
2021
2024

For a synodal Church

communion participation

| mission

Synthesis of the Continental Phase of the synod of synodality in Latin America and the

Narrative: the continental phase of the synod in Latin America and the Caribbean



1. “It is possible to walk with Christ at the center and let ourselves be guided by the Spirit of God. We have the growing hope of living in a new time for the Church”. This expression of one of the participants in the Continental Phase of the Synod reflects the enthusiasm that the process aroused in Latin America and the Caribbean and that had as its central moment of discernment the four regional meetings held in El Salvador, Santo Domingo, Quito and Brasilia. in February and March 2023.
2. The preparation of the Continental Phase began a year before, with the formation of a commission that accompanied the national teams in charge of animating the Diocesan Phase and which, at the same time, was establishing the way of carrying out the continental assembly, in dialogue with the General Secretariat of the Synod. After a few months, a work team was consolidated, made up of Msgr. Miguel Cabrejos (CELAM president), Msgr. Jorge Lozano (CELAM general secretary), Fr. Pedro Brassesco (CELAM adjunct secretary), Sr. Daniela Cannavina (CLAR Secretary General), Fr. F.

Hernández (executive secretary of Caritas Latin America), Mauricio López (director of CELAM's Ceprap and liaison with the Synod's general secretariat) and Oscar Elizalde (director of CELAM's Center for Communications).

3. The Latin American and Caribbean Church has traveled a path of participatory experiences marked by the five General Conferences of the Latin American Episcopate, the Amazon Synod, the Ecclesial Assembly and the ecclesial structures of communion on the continent.
4. Our Church is nourished by the social and cultural diversity of each region, which is an aspect to be cared for and strengthened in order to consolidate the common identity and a renewed enculturation of the Gospel in the towns. For this reason it was decided that the Continental Stage would have as its central moment the holding of regional meetings that would allow greater participation, discernment and listening in order to contribute their own richness and the particular way of being Church.
5. Out of a total of 400 participants, a number of representatives for each country was established, proportional to the total population, also assigning an estimated number of bishops, priests, religious men and women, deacons, lay men and women. Among the latter, the special integration of people who were part of areas that had not been sufficiently heard in the diocesan phase was requested.
Finally, CELAM invited representatives of periphery sectors that had not been invited either.
6. The regional meetings were held in San Salvador (El Salvador) for the Central America and Mexico region, from February 13 to 17; Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) for the Caribbean region, from February 20 to 24; Quito (Ecuador) for the Bolivarian region, from February 27 to March 3; and Brasilia (Brazil) from March 6 to 10, for the Southern Cone region.
7. A total of 415 people participated: 96 in Central America and Mexico; 41 in Caribbean countries; 92 in the Bolivarian region and 177 in Cono

South. There were 65 bishops; 70 priests; 61 men and women religious, 16 deacons and 194 laymen and women.

8. Each assembly opened with a spiritual retreat on Monday morning. It was a moment of profound encounter with the Spirit where the physical space in which they were held was significant: in El Salvador, in the martyrdom chapel of Saint Oscar Romero and in Santo Domingo, in the Primate Cathedral of America. In the afternoon there was time for the presentation of the synodal process in relation to the Ecclesial Assembly, the explanation of the methodology of spiritual conversation and the formation of communities of life with a first meeting so that its members could get to know each other.
9. The following days were dedicated to reflecting on the Document for the Continental Stage and the three questions it raises. The third chapter was divided into three parts, each day one of them was addressed with three group sessions, one for each question. At the end of each day there was a sharing of all the communities as a new moment of joint discernment. 423 syntheses were collected with intuitions, tensions and topics to be deepened based on what was developed in the DEC. A CELAM team registered and systematized these proposals, identifying common themes, but respecting the multiplicity of voices and suggestions.
10. On the last day, the assemblies were divided into groups by vocations to reread the experience and make new contributions on the horizons for the next stage, which made it possible to receive another 30 documents with contributions.
11. Added to the contribution of the regions was the process carried out by some pastoral organizations such as the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA), the Red Ecclesial PanAmazónica (REPAM) and the Afro Pastoral, which made their own path in the light of the DEC in various meetings and meetings.

12. The moments of spirituality strongly marked each day, allowing to live a climate of encounter with God and a fraternal sense of community beyond the diversity of states of life, languages, positions or places of origin of each participant. In addition, the local organizers offered moments of leisure or cultural exchange that made it possible to strengthen the ties of belonging to each region. Each assembly ended with the celebration of the Eucharist.
13. From March 17 to 20, it took place at the CELAM headquarters in Bogotá (Colombia) the meeting for the drafting of the continental synthesis based on the contribution of all the assemblies. Members of CELAM's theological-pastoral reflection team were summoned (many of whom participated in the assemblies), the facilitators who carried out the methodology in each meeting, and the members of the coordinating team of the continental phase. A team of sixteen people, accompanied by members of the General Secretariat of the Synod who guided the process.
14. The writing implied discerning in the light of the Spirit and what was lived, individually and then as a group, the main themes. In an assembly, the scheme was agreed upon and with the contributions offered, the themes were drafted by groups, taking care to insert quotes that reflected the voices heard. The writing team consolidated the final text from the joint reading, the corrections and suggestions made.
15. On March 21, in the framework of the face-to-face meeting of the general secretaries of Episcopal Conferences, and with the online participation of their presidents, the day was dedicated to collegially reread the synodal experience lived from their charism and responsibility specific. Within this framework, the process developed and the proposal for the text of the synthesis were presented to the bishops. Then, gathered in pastoral regions, the document was read and finally, in plenary, they made their contributions and evaluations. The dialogue was enriched by the presence of Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, rapporteur of the Synod; Bishop Luis Marín de San Martín, undersecretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod

do; and Fr. Giacomo Costa, coordinator of the Synod Preparatory Commission.

16. Thus, the experience lived in this Continental Phase has consolidated the participatory and community character of the Church that pilgrimages in Latin America and the Caribbean and has contributed new notes from the methodology used, the strong spiritual imprint that has been sought rado and openness to listening to new voices.

Introduction: a Church in synodal key



17. In the Latin American and Caribbean Church, the continental stage of the synodal process convened by Pope Francis has been carried out with the theme *For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission*. In the preceding narrative, the process of listening, dialogue and discernment carried out in the four regional assemblies with the participation of the twenty-two Episcopal Conferences was explained. In this walk together we have learned to develop more fully the sense of "we ecclesiastical" and various fruits have been gathered.
18. The conciliar, synodal and collegial life in our Church has a long history. On the path followed by the great missionaries of the first evangelization stands Santa María de Guadalupe with her brown face, her message of "God for whom one lives", her pedagogy inculturated by conversation in the indigenous language and the search for a land without evil She is the first missionary disciple from the mainland.
- In the pilgrim Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Spirit distributed a rich diversity of gifts to its peoples and endowed them with spiritual and community values, such as respect for sister mother earth. For five centuries the Church, with lights and shadows, with

holiness and sin, he evangelized the continent giving witness to the faith and fighting for justice – above all for his saints and martyrs – and thus contributed to forming communities of children, brothers and sisters.

19. In recent times, we have welcomed the power of the Holy Spirit who always rejuvenates his face through significant synodal processes. This common path intensified since 1955 with the celebration of the First General Conference of the Episcopate in Rio de Janeiro and the creation of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), a communion and coordination body at the service of the bishops and the Episcopal Conferences. In addition, the assemblies of the General Conferences of the Episcopate stand out: Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979), Santo Domingo (1992) and Aparecida (2007), in the Marian sanctuary of Brazil, with the invitation to be disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ so that, in Him, our peoples may have life.
20. In 2019, Pope Francis suggested preparing the first Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, insisting that it be not only an episcopal meeting but of all the holy faithful people of God who walk, pray, talk, think, discuss and seek his will. The celebration of this Assembly in 2021 was received with great joy. This unprecedented experience, the fruit of the overflow of the Spirit, took place in the midst of the pandemic crisis and constituted, in times of suffering and death, the prophetic sign of a Church that is alive and close to its people to sow hope and build the future. It is a true milestone that combines the participation of many members of the People of God with the exercise of the pastoral ministry of bishops and episcopates. With everything shared, the *text Towards a Synodal Church on the way to the peripheries was prepared. Reflections and pastoral proposals from the First Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean.*
21. In addition, other synodal processes of different dimensions and magnitude have been experienced that teach us to walk together: CELAM was renovated and restructured with a more synodal style; the Synod Assembly for the Amazon Region was held; the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon - CEAMA was created; and they settled

various ecclesial networks: Panamazonic Ecclesial Network – REPAM; Mesoamerican Ecclesial Ecological Network – REMAM; Ecclesial Network of the Gran Chaco and the Guaraní Aquifer – REDCHAG. These networks pay particular attention to the inculturation of the Gospel and of the Church, the peculiar problems of indigenous and Afro-American communities, the values of interculturality and care for the common hom

22. In the context of these ecclesial processes, in the midst of the complex realities of our countries and of our region, the Latin American and Caribbean churches received the convocation of Pope Francis to the synod on the Synodal Church. We wanted to integrate this new process into the regional experience and, at the same time, contribute to the synodality of the entire Church since recent history, knowing that the Spirit is weaving harmony. The People of God is experiencing the call to feel like an active subject of the Church. In the assembly of the Central America and Mexico Region (CAMEX), a layman expressed: *"This is already a Synod."* All these processes have been intertwined, forging rich inputs of experiences, concerns and proposals.
23. The Synod Secretariat has formulated the main question that guides the way in the question: *"how is this 'walking together' that allows the Church to announce today, at different levels (from the local to the universal) carried out the Gospel, in accordance with the mission entrusted to it; And what steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow as a synodal Church?"* (Preparatory Document 2, 26, Document for the Continental Stage 2, 105). In a regional meeting, this question was clarified: "What do we mean when we say "Synodal Church"? These great questions invite us to delve into a theological, pastoral and spiritual reflection that helps to live ecclesiality, synodality, ministeriality and collegiality.
24. Here we synthesize the main contributions of the itinerary carried out in the continental stage in Latin America and the Caribbean around eight main themes that, at the same time, include and refer to other important issues for the spirit and practice of synodality . They

They bring together concerns, tensions and priorities. Each and every one of them is considered *“in a synodal key”*.

1. The leading role of the Spirit in a synodal Church.
2. The synodality of the People of God.
3. Synodality: the way of being and acting of the Church.
4. Missionary Synodal Church.
5. Synodality: socio-environmental commitment in a fragile world
 lied.
6. Synodal conversion and restructuring reform.
7. Vocations, Charisms and Ministries in synodal key.
8. Contributions of the Latin American and Caribbean synodal itinerary.

1. The leading role of the Spirit in a synodal Church



25. The Church is the People gathered by participating in the communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. LG 4). The path traveled has allowed us to recognize how God is really leading the Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean towards an increasingly synodal way of being that is inherent to the Church, but which is regaining significant importance in the face of the challenges that changes of society pose to his life of communion and mission. This implies an awareness of the experience of our smallness and fragility, intensified by the crisis of the pandemic. It is necessary to *"trust and affirm the Holy Spirit as the protagonist of this process, and to illuminate the changes that can take place in the Church of Jesus"* (Camex).

26. At Pentecost the Spirit is at the origin of the Church and is the permanent source of its vitality. It is He who moves her to flow and go through history with relevance and meaning and who leads her along paths of renewal and the future. He shapes the face of the Church and the relational fabric that makes unity in diversity possible. Without him, there is no authentic following of Jesus, no new life, no ecclesial *kairos*. The Spirit encourages his Church to an authentic conversion that supposes: lis

dialogue, discernment, honing attention to reality and the ability to understand the cry of God in the permanent cries that resonate in history. *"This is the moment to recognize the kairos that we live, with confidence in the Spirit and the certainty that everything is the work of God"* (Southern Cone).

27. The experience of knowing that we are inhabited by the Spirit has launched us beyond our own analyzes and reflections, it has invited us to overcome the temptation of intimacy, fundamentalisms and ideologies that make us disguise as God's will when they are a search for particular interests. He asked us to situate ourselves in context and root the ecclesial journey in the depths of history, until we allow ourselves to be permeated by reality, recognizing that in it God manifests himself and acts, calls us to commitment, to work with Him, passionate for his Kingdom. We have understood the synodal path *"as the personal and community process of radical openness to the action of the Holy Spirit, who is the only one capable of creating a new Pentecostal in the Church and overcoming the constant temptation to fragment ourselves"* (Bolivia).
28. The action of the Spirit, like everything in the dynamism of the Kingdom of God, needs to be discerned, his voice needs to be heard and accepted, listening to "what the Spirit says to the churches" (Ap. 2, 11). His impulses require the docility of our hearts. Hence the need to assume a permanent attitude of discernment, seeking not to do our own will, but like Jesus, to do the will of the Father of Mercy. This generates great tension when we live in a time in which individuality and voluntarism have been exalted so much, and the "I" is made the measure of all things; when we are tempted to impose on others our own intentions and ideologies that are partial visions of reality. To discern means to distinguish, among so many voices and movements, what comes from the Spirit, what the Lord tells us and expects of us. That is what we have done in this process trying to overcome our own temptations. This discernment needs to become more and more communitarian, as the same experience of faith, and attentive to the *"sensus fidei"* of the people of God on the journey.
29. We are summoned to a profound reform of the Church, that which arises from the action of God in the bowels of history. *"Here's what*

I make everything new, don't you notice? (Is 43,19). We are called to live a conversion that has its origin in faithful listening to God and to reality, a listening that is the condition for the transformation of the heart. We must listen to each other and discern the signs of the times to seek together the Will of God in the light of Sacred Scripture.

30. During this synodal journey we have felt the call to listen to the melody of the present, convinced that the quality of listening determines the quality of the response and opens paths to missionary commitment. We see that the Church is today, more than ever, advocating for a new, more contextualized relational style, embodied in reality, capable of listening and making the different voices resonate, and of positioning itself by generating the necessary dialogue that favors the encounter. We feel called to generate authentic dynamics of listening, participation, communion, shared mission and co-responsibility.
31. In those who participated in the synodal process, a fruit of the Spirit is the renewal of their hope and the humble and confident recognition of how synodal conversion is led by the Spirit. From the attitude centered on thinking of the synodal assembly and the final document as the desired response, we have gone on to recognize the need for patience, perseverance, perseverance in purpose, creative courage and audacity, which are virtues linked to the hope. We have come to the conviction of how synodal conversion begins in the setting of our own daily life, and from there it projects itself, like leaven in dough, towards the transformation of the entire world. *"On the synodal path we must not run, we must follow the rhythm of the Spirit so that experience allows us to give time to each moment" (Camex). "The synodal path is an invitation to be peasants of faith; This requires us to learn new verbs: wait without despair, water what is necessary for each type of plant, persevere without getting tired, sure that we are led by the Spirit" (Bolivariana).*
32. The People of God walked in the hope of the coming of the Savior. Today walk in the joyful hope of his return, which encourages our service to the Kingdom and yearns for the fullness of Life for all.

2. The synodality of the People of God



33. Many voices heard in the four regional assemblies remind us that the synodal renewal supposes *“recovering the conciliar proposal expressed with the notion of the People of God, which emphasizes equality and common dignity before differences in ministries and charisms” (Bolivarian)*.
34. The Church is the community of those who follow "the Way of the Lord" (Acts 18, 25). It is the People of God on pilgrimage in the world. Synodality manifests the social and historical dimension of the Church, which is rooted in the pilgrim condition of the human being, who travels through life in search of happiness. The People of God is called to walk together with the entire human family, being a sacrament of salvation and hope. Here arises the double dimension of synodality insofar as it expresses walking together in the life of the Church and accompanying the history of peoples towards the fullness of the Kingdom of God.
35. In the common journey of the churches of Latin America and the Caribbean, we are developing the sense of “we” through the experience and dynamics of old and new synodal processes. In this process we are making life our conviction that the People of God in

way is the subject of synodal communion. The assemblies reaffirmed what was expressed by the Second Vatican Council, regarding the common dignity and fundamental equality of all the baptized, women and men. The gift of faith and the sacrament of baptism make us followers of Jesus and confer on all of us belonging to the one People of God, from the smallest of the baptized to the successor of Saint Peter.

36. In our itinerary we feel and affirm that synodality helps us to be a more participatory and co-responsible Church. A synodal Church has the challenge of encouraging the participation of all, according to the vocation of each and every one, with the authority conferred by Christ on the College of Bishops presided over in charity by the Bishop of Rome. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are called and are empowered to put the gifts received from the Holy Spirit at the service of others. The authority of the Pastors is a gift of the same Spirit of Christ the Head to serve the edification of the whole Body. In synodal communion, the Bishops exercise their apostolic mission walking, accompanying and guiding their brothers to follow Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life.
37. Synodality expresses the condition of subject that corresponds to the whole Church and to everyone in the Church. We believers are brothers and sisters on the same path, called to be active subjects by participating in the unique priesthood of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the source of a vast diversity of vocations, identities, talents, competencies, and ministries that enrich unity in communion.
Here a permanent challenge arises about what is the synodal way to promote diversities avoiding that they become divisions, and to build unity taking care that it does not become homogeneous. The vast majority of the Christian faithful are lay men and women who receive the faith and learn to live the communion of love within their families and communities.
38. Synodal life bears witness to a Church made up of individuals and communities that are free and diverse subjects, called to relate fraternally through bonds of mutual respect and reciprocal affection. Mu-

Many voices questioned how we treat each other in the Church, especially between pastors and laity, and between women and men. In all the assemblies we heard a deep cry to be well treated, respected as equals, and valued in their own identity and specific contribution.

The shared discernment shows that we can still go a long way to relate to more evangelical, humanizing and synodal attitudes. *"We need a structural change that uninstalls us. It requires flexibility, dialogue, tolerance, acceptance, respect. Do not put new wine in old wineskins"* (Caribbean).

39. One challenge is to open the spaces, provide the means and generate forms for the effective participation of women in the instances of discernment and decision. The synodal assembly in October should deepen these themes: women's leadership and their contribution to theological reflection, in pastoral councils, in accompanying communities, in the areas of elaboration and decision-making. *"The participation of women is a prophecy, it is a factor of hope"*

(Southern Cone).

40. Synodality is founded on and expressed in the celebrations of Baptism and the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of Christian life. In the Eucharistic assembly, baptismal communion is updated and a dynamism of participation is generated. There is a tension between different ways of valuing and living these sacraments. There are those who point to *"a tension between a ritualistic liturgy and an open and inculturated liturgy"* (Southern Cone). *"It is necessary to build new liturgical languages and expressions, maintaining the Eucharist as the source and summit of walking together"* (Bolivariana).

41. Synodality promotes the ecumenical commitment of all Christians because it is an invitation to travel together the paths towards full unity in Christ. Without minimizing differences, synodality opens us to recognize legitimate diversities in a reciprocal exchange of gifts and guides our steps towards a "reconciled harmony". At the same time, a synodal Church wishes to continue advancing interreligious dialogue and universal brotherhood on all continents.

42. In the different peoples, who experience the gift of God according to their own culture, the Church expresses its genuine catholicity and shows the beauty of this multifaceted face. *“In order to advance in the configuration of Churches with their own face and respond to the specific challenges of their context, the Amazon feels the need for greater autonomy and diversification of the local Churches, as well as their representative bodies, such as the Episcopal Conferences” (Ceama - Repam).*

3. Synodality: the way of being and acting of the Church.



43. Synodality is the dynamic dimension of ecclesial communion, called to embody a way of being and acting founded on union with the Holy Trinity, animated by the Spirit and centered on Jesus Christ. The encounter with the person of the Lord is the fundamental criterion of all discernment and what sustains the evangelizing mission of the Church. We are convinced that *"the great horizon is the discernment of a new way of being Church from the encounter with Christ as a way for communion, participation and mission with a clear pastoral conversion that reflects the desire to live in synodality in all its areas, until that synodality becomes a way of life for us [...]"* (Bolivarian).
44. Missionary disciples find their source of life and inspiration in the celebration of the feast of the Eucharist and in the prayerful reading - personal and communal - of the Word of God, which allows them to live in a continuous process of pastoral conversion, strengthen the sense of belonging to the ecclesial community and foster a co-responsible participation in the synodal journey.
45. The missionary disciple Church, attentive to the signs of the times, feels invited to cultivate an incarnate and masculine synodal spirituality.

rian because *"Mary reminds us that Christ is the center of our life and model of the synodal walk" (Bolivariana)*. It rescues the wealth of faith and popular piety *"to strengthen the interior experience of our people as a complement to liturgical life" (Bolivarian)*, which must be inculturated, and must express the *"wisdom, joy and teachings of our peoples [...] They contribute, celebrate, listen, welcome, accompany, give and receive in the various dimensions of existence" (Afro-Garífuna Contribution)*.

46. The Church's synodal way of being and acting requires assuming a style of community discernment based on mutual listening to the Spirit and truthful and trusting dialogue. It is the *"Spirit who drives us to this openness, to this search for the new of God, even running all the risks that this implies" (Caribbean)*. It is necessary to *"overcome fears when listening, because we know that it commits us to action and response to the brother listened to" (Southern Cone)*.
47. For this discerning listening, the Church must consider and exercise spiritual conversation. As a method and praxis, it helps to learn to listen, to dialogue, to be formed in itineraries, dynamics and processes that structure a personal, ecclesial and structural conversion. In the light of this style, the necessary reciprocity is generated that leads us to the complementarity of the vocation and the gifts of each one. The dynamic will be *"learning to listen, to listen to ourselves and above all to listen deeply, because when we listen to the other person deeply (full attention) it touches, removes our being and requires transforming attitudes, changing ways of relating and moving on to dialogue" (Indigenous Peoples contribution)*. This way of being helps to recreate ties and invites us to have a new way of relating, open to the action of the Spirit, which always surprises and opens new paths. Synodality supposes a *"spirituality that consists of loving and listening, responsibly, with commitment and without fear"* (Southern Cone); It moves us to embrace the *"path of forgiveness and reconciliation, acknowledging our faults and omissions, to rebuild from our own vulnerability, the Synodal Church" (Camex-Sur)*.
48. In the light of reflection on the method of spiritual conversation, especially auspicious for this time, intuitions, tensions

and priorities that can help in the process. The spiritual conversation enables to talk about uncomfortable and painful topics freely, in an experience of horizontal relationship. Far from canceling one's own identity and life stories, it helps to put oneself in the other's place, tune in to their sentiments, and from there refine one's own convictions. This experience includes a formative itinerary: open to learning, to combine feelings and ideas that leads to changes, makes unlikely encounters possible, favors dialogue and creates channels of communication.

49. It is perceived that the animation and action of the Spirit accompany the entire process. It is necessary to live this experience from an interior freedom and with an open heart, avoid arguing, imposing ideas, "agendas" and everything that prevents the Holy Spirit from being the protagonist.
50. The method is like an ascending spiral cycle that progresses from I (1st moment – feelings: personal) to letting myself be touched by the other, the you (2nd moment – echoes: relational), to finally reach us (3rd moment – choose the will of God: the common). The method should not be the sum of individual discernments, but rather the means and the expression of a community process.
51. It is important to seek how to integrate the hermeneutic method See - Judge - Act, assumed by the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the process of spiritual conversation, in such a way that a deep analysis of reality associated with discernment is maintained, and that always results in the search for a consensus in order to transformative action. Certainly there are already advances from our region that come from the experience of the continental synodal work: associating seeing with listening, contemplating; judging with discerning, interpreting; and acting with projecting, responding.
52. In order to favor the synodal discernment process, its times and its steps, in fidelity to what has been shared and to what the Spirit wants to tell us, the training and induction of moderators and group secretaries is considered important. Train the moderator

to encourage the process as such, avoiding falling into a mere opinion group; and to the secretary, so that they can help develop a community synthesis and not remain in a return as a mere brainstorming.

4. Missionary Synodal Church.



53. A synodal Church, according to the motto of the Synod, is a Church in communion and participation for the mission – *“the Church that is synodal has the challenge and the mission of showing itself to be missionary” (Caribbean)*. For this reason, *“structures are urgently needed to ensure a missionary Synodality, including all the members of the periphery” (Camex)*. Instead of closing the Church in on itself, synodality leads a missionary Church at the service of universal brotherhood. Just like synodality, missionary nature is constitutive of the Church, since every baptized person is a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ in his Church. Discipleship is following Jesus, setting out on his way to ^{with} collaborate with his work and prolong it in history. In turn, the work of Jesus is to evangelize and, therefore, this is also the mission of the Church. As Saint Paul VI said, *“the Church exists to evangelize” (IN 14)*. A *“review of the structures and of the ecclesial institution as a whole, based on service and evangelization”* is necessary (Southern Cone).

54. Jesus, in his person, his life, his work and his Passover, makes the Kingdom of God present. The Kingdom is an absolute, against which everything becomes relative. The evangelizing mission of the Church is none other than to give continuity to the mission of Jesus, contributing to the growth of the Kingdom.

in the world, especially in the peripheries, which should be its center. It is necessary to *“bring the Good News to the peripheries; also recognize that it is incarnated there and is life, that synodality is lived and built” (Bolivariana).*

55. The mission, in a synodal key, is not proselytism, which leads to a self-referential Church, eclipsing the Kingdom of God, of which it is the sacrament. It is necessary *“to be a credible Church, sacrament of the Kingdom” (Caribbean).* The mission consists of the joyful and free announcement of Jesus Christ and his paschal mystery to all humanity, in an intercultural relationship, since it is inserted in a plural and diverse world. It is pointed out that *“the clearest horizon that opens up is the challenge of evangelization in diversity. How to be missionary disciples in the midst of the diversity of contexts, situations and the complexity of the world” (Caribbean).* It is urgent to *“attend to the subjects of evangelization, respecting their culture, inviting them to participate, approaching their way of life and understanding their vision of the world” (Southern Cone).* The mission consists of incarnating the Gospel in the cultures, contributing to the formation of autochthonous local Churches, with the face of the peoples that comprise them. To an incarnated Church corresponds an inculturated and inculturating evangelization of the Church as an institution, in its organization and its structures.
56. Synodality helps all the baptized to be active subjects of the evangelizing mission, since the People of God walk with a humanity that is all pilgrims, in a position of dialogue and service to the world, with a view to universal brotherhood. It is pointed out that *“the world needs a ‘Church on the way out’ that rejects division, that turns its gaze to humanity and offers it, more than a doctrine or a strategy, an experience of salvation, an “overflow of the gift” that responds to the cry of humanity and nature” (Camex).* In the evangelizing mission, the others are not only addressees, but also interlocutors, because the missionary disciples are situated in a horizontal relationship and communion with all people of good will, in whom the Spirit of God acts.

Synodality leads to an open missionary nature, to participation and an exchange without borders.

57. However, the evangelizing identity of the Church does not seem to be always present in all communities because, sometimes, they

they are more concerned with solving their internal problems and not with announcing the Good News. There is a tension *"between a self-centered church and a missionary church"* (Southern Cone). From this the temptation can arise to *"believe that first we have to solve the problems of synodality and then go on mission"* (Caribe). Synodality and mission are two closely linked aspects because synodality enriches the mission and mission dynamizes synodality.

58. In the regional assemblies it is mentioned that the ecclesial tendency to focus on itself can arise from *"fear and doubt about how to get out in daily life and in living with people"* (Bolivariana). There is also *"fear of losing power and desire to control, which leads to intolerance and rigidity that prevents taking concrete and bold steps to fulfill the evangelizing mission of leading people to their encounter with God"* (Caribbean). This causes a strong tension between a pastoral care of mere conservation, which ensures the spaces and times of the community, and a Church that not only expands its tent to welcome, but also goes out of it to meet others where they are.
59. In this sense, a question arises that generates different accents: how far and in what way should the Gospel penetrate cultures? It is the challenge of discerning how to carry out the evangelizing task in the current context of diversity, multiculturalism and interculturality, in order to learn to live the faith in great diversity.
- "This inculturation must also influence the construction of liturgical spaces to make them more suitable for the theology of synodality"* (Southern Cone).
60. Evangelization is carried out through the witness of personal and community life. Faith grows by the attraction of God's grace, values individuals and peoples as subjects, and recognizes the evangelizing heritage of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples who live the faith in their own way. Another *"challenge for the Church in its evangelizing mission is sectarianism"* (Southern Cone), understood as the division and internal struggles of sectors closed in on themselves, which is a counter-testimony.

61. It is also requested *“to move from an evangelization centered on sin, to a perspective of the Good News, like the doctor who, before focusing on illness, focuses his work starting from health; (This is how we can) move from regretting to taking care of what we can do” (Bolivarian)*. On the other hand, it is necessary to always remember what the purpose of the evangelizing mission is, because sometimes it is reduced to one of its processes, such as the administration of the sacraments, rather than promoting a true encounter with Christ that initiates and strengthens a journey follow-up and
62. In the meetings, the role of the laity and especially of women in the transmission of the faith has been highlighted. The catechists and evangelizers who, in distant places and difficult contexts, with passion and hope, are a gift from God that we appreciate and value. However, it has also been mentioned that a tension is sometimes perceived with the clergy that assumes the responsibility of directing all evangelizing action in the community. *“The support, proclamation and testimony of the missionary women must be valued. And this is fundamental in a synodal Church” (Bolivarian)*.

5. Synodality: socio-environmental commitment in a fragmented world.



63. Synodality motivates the Church to come out of herself and to place herself with all her mission at the service of society. As the summaries show, there are synodal experiences of a Church companion on the road of the peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean. Several contributions affirm that, in many societies in our region, there is a great ethnic, cultural and social diversity. This is wealth, but it can also be perceived as a threat. This is manifested in multiple fragmentations, in great inequalities, in the marginalization and exclusion of different groups on the continent. Our societies also suffer strong ideological and political polarizations; In various countries, a weakening of democracy as a system of representation and government is observed with concern. In these contexts, a synodal Church is called to renew its preferential option for the poor and to highlight the social dimension of evangelization, because if it "is not duly made explicit, there is always the risk of disfiguring the authentic and integral meaning that has an evangelizing mission" (EG 176).

64. During the meetings, attention was drawn to what is observed in many places: *“the distancing of the local Churches from reality, from the cries that come from the lands and from the towns, from the diverse realities of the people Vulnerable people, from the peripheries”* (Southern Cone), be they geographical, territorial, social and existential peripheries. The poor have many faces: faces of women, native peoples and Afro-descendants, people in vulnerable conditions such as migrants and refugees, people with disabilities, vulnerable children and the elderly, and many others.
65. A synodal Church is called to *“be a more prophetic and Samaritan Church. A prophetic Church and on a missionary outing, that really goes out to the geographical and existential peripheries and that listens to the cry of the poor and creation”* (Bolivariana). It is important that in the synodal process we have the audacity to bring up and discern great themes, often forgotten or relegated, and to meet with the other and with all those who are part of the human family and are often marginalized, also in our Church. In various appeals it is recalled that in the spirit of Jesus we must *“be inclusive of the poor, LGTBQ+ communities, couples in second unions, priests who want to return to the Church in their new situation, women who abort out of fear, the imprisoned, the sick”* (Southern Cone). It is about *“walking together in a synodal Church that listens to all types of exiles so that they feel at home”, a Church that is “a refuge for the wounded and broken”*. (Southern Cone). This calls for availability to *“go out to meet, give our attention, get involved. Because synodality means not waiting for the people to come, but going out to meet them”* (Southern Cone).
66. The Church offers her Samaritan love and her solidarity service by learning to walk with all those who are also at the service of those who suffer, seek to generate alternatives to the throwaway culture, and confront the different types of violence that have been accentuated in the last years. Among them, the violence linked to the great social inequalities, drug trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking, the mistreatment of children and women. In this walk together the Church is discovering different ways of being synodal

in alliances with social and popular movements, and other people and institutions involved in promoting all, such as the Global Education Pact.

67. Some contributions ask: *"Hearing the cry of the peoples and the land" is a commitment to the Gospel that asks us to be allies with the peoples in defense of life and their territories" (Southern Cone)*. This is especially true for the Amazon, threatened by ecological collapse, with disastrous consequences for life on earth and its peoples.
- There is a feeling from the Amazon that indicates *"the abandonment of our indigenous peoples; the lack of a true presence in the midst of the Amazonian peoples" (Bolivariana)*. It is identified as *"a pending issue: reaching the original peoples, marginalized by their different language, culture and worldview; and [...] reach the [other] peripheries, approach and welcome the destitute, those of other creeds and customs-values" (Southern Cone)*.
68. The socio-environmental service to which the Church is called to serve in the light of the Gospel and the social doctrine of the Church, is reinforced in an ecumenical and interreligious dialogue that leads to common action. In many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean there are Interreligious Councils in which representatives of various Christian Churches and multiple religions present in our region actively participate. From a shared commitment to the promotion of Human Rights, justice, peace and care for the common home, they jointly carry out activities in favor of society.
69. Several contributions express that a synodal Church, experienced as a field hospital, must give a central place to young people. In order to be close to them, heal their wounds and accompany them in their searches, the Church must *"adapt its language, its symbols to be closer to their concrete realities. We must think of new methods to enchant and rescue the presence of young people in the Church, going where they are and walking together with them."* (Southern Cone). It is important that *"they, and also us, become aware of the leading role they have to assume in the Church and in society" (Southern Cone)*.

70. The request for listening, integration and participation in decision-making by young people is reiterated. The prayer that a group of them prayed at the meeting in the Southern Cone echoes, expressing why their friends from the Church had left and concluding with a heartfelt prayer: “God, Mother and Father, hear our cry of prayer ! *Blow hard so that the Church does not forget the young, so that they can embrace their life as it comes, with their dreams and desires, and accompany them in the task of spreading and promoting synodality*”.
71. Many young people show great sensitivity to social and environmental problems with great creativity in generating solutions from their spaces. Being “digital natives”, they have much more knowledge and skills to help the Church discover the digital potentials for evangelism, networking and synodal culture in these spaces.
72. The participation of representatives of the Digital Synod in the assemblies generated interest in a more active and purposeful presence in this space. The need to more closely accompany the digital evangelizers was also seen.

6. Synodal conversion and restructuring reform.



73. The Second Vatican Council conceives of the Church as an institution in need of permanent renewal. In continuity with the Council, Francis refers to the Church as *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, which requires the conversion of the entire ecclesial community. The Latin American and Caribbean Church assumes this call as a permanent pastoral conversion, which asks to review "personal and community praxis, relations of equality and authority, and structures and dynamisms" (SD 30). The regions consulted stated that "*synodality requires a personal, community, ecclesial and structural conversion*" (Southern Cone), for which reason "*a change of mentality, a change of structures*" (Camex) is urgent.

74. This call is not without its challenges and tensions. We find people and groups who want to separate the change of mentality and personal conversion from the reform of the structures, just as there are those who do not want the reform of the Church. For this reason, these changes must be part of a process of "*active conversion, for a real transformation of mind and heart, since we were all formed at different times and have many deep-rooted practices*" (Southern Cone). From this derives the need for local Churches to generate processes and spaces for listening, dialogue and discernment.

I encourage them to continue to deepen the fundamental question of the synodal journey: “How is this journey together carried out today in our own particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take?” (Prep Doc 26).

75. The answer to these questions is built involving the entire People of God. It is necessary to take the step towards an authentic *synodization* of the whole Church, which will suppose “*spiritual, pastoral and institutional reforms*” (DA 367) with the purpose of giving shape to a new institutional model. In the regional consultations it is recognized that, to achieve this, it is necessary to create “*new pastoral options based on a change of mentality and renewal of existing structures*” (Caribbean). In this context, the challenge of procuring a reform of seminaries and houses of formation arises, especially when some of these institutions have not overcome their Tridentine form. Many people see “*seminaries as closed houses that do not help the vision of a ministerial priesthood*” (Camex). It is necessary to continue with the updated reform of the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*. In the formation of candidates for the presbyterate, families, lay people and consecrated men and women must be involved. This was emphasized by all the regional assemblies.
76. The entire renewal process towards greater synodality in the Church requires more formation. It was requested that the formative and catechetical itineraries be comprehensive and that the members of the People of God carry them out jointly. It was highlighted that families, as domestic churches, and ecclesial, parish and educational communities, should be the first area of formation in synodal communion. At the same time, it is requested that the parishes can be renewed based on the community of communities model, thus revitalizing small communities.
77. Among the numerous proposals and requests for formation expressed in the assemblies as a prominent theme, various horizons and areas emerge: “*we believe in the importance of synodal formation and for this reason we would like to contribute some ideas for an integral formation: learning to work from collaborative way; grow in a culture of discernment; implementation of transparency in the various spheres of ecclesial life; acquisition of competence*”

digital and radio channels to be permanently connected with the needs of the parishioners; show life experiences to make visible the relevance of synodality” (Bolivarian).

78. A transversal axis in all ecclesial spheres is that of formation for a culture of respect for all people and in the prevention of all kinds of abuses.
79. The regional consultations mention the priority of making the constitution of the various councils promoted by Vatican II mandatory: the presbyteral councils, those for economic affairs (diocesan and parochial) and the pastoral councils (diocesan and parochial). They also ask that *they “be a space for inclusion, dialogue, transparency and discernment not only at the national and regional level, but also in the base communities, parishes and dioceses, prelatures and vicariates, following the process of communion and participation”.* (Southern Cone). It is recognized that the councils offer *“permanent areas for the exercise and promotion of communion and synodality” (CTI, Sinodality, 80).* But its formal implementation is not enough. Each one is asked *“not to be a merely consultative space, but to ensure that it has a weight in decisions on the mode of government and change of structures” (Camex).*
80. A Church structured from a network of councils would make it possible to establish institutional procedures for accountability and transparency that start from the communities and help to eradicate abuses of conscience, power, spiritual, psychological, sexual, economic. This requires creating instances and protocols for prevention, reparation and justice (cf. AE 355). This would respond to the voices that see *“a tension between the desire for a more transparent Church versus a culture of secrecy” (Southern Cone),* and that call for a greater *“commitment to caring for and listening to victims of abuse” (camex).* This and other aspects will require *“opening up to possible modifications in Canon Law that give legal form to synodal practice; especially that synodal institutions are recognized by law and that law helps to guarantee and promote greater transparency” (Southern Cone).*
81. The emergence of a new synodal ecclesiality places us before the challenge of imagining new structures. Some have already emerged

such as the Ecclesial Conference for the Amazon (CEAMA) and the first Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean. However, concern has appeared to see how to articulate episcopal collegiality and synodal ecclesiality, which invites us to think about how to integrate the elaboration and decision-making, because "the synodal dimension of the Church must be *expressed by carrying out and governing processes of participation and discernment capable of manifesting the dynamism of communion that inspires all ecclesial decisions*" (CTI, Synodality 76).

Likewise, these new structures place us before forms of organization and functioning that have to see how to articulate the sense of faith of all the faithful, the episcopal authority and the service of theology, because the Holy Spirit speaks through everything. the People of God as a whole and not just some (the bishops) or one (the bishop of Rome, who has primacy). *"If the People of God were not subject to decision-making, there would be no synodality. And if the People of God is not constitutive of a body that makes decisions for the Church as a whole, this body is not synodal either"* (Ceama-Repam). In all that has been said, it is understood that it is necessary to *"renew and rethink the structures of the Church to respond to the challenges of today's world by interpreting the signs of the times [and] one step for this is the reform of the Code of Canon Law"* (Bolivarian).

7. Vocations, Charisms and Ministries in synodal key.



82. *“Synodality is the art of valuing, welcoming and knowing how to articulate all the gifts and charisms that the Lord has given us, in such a way that they flow and become a channel of grace and blessing, and, therefore, it is important to value the different vocations” (Bolivarian).* The Church is a prophetic, priestly and royal-serving People where all its members are subjects of theological life towards holiness. They receive various charisms from God to serve the common good (Cf. AE 171).
83. In the regional meetings the richness of the diversity of charisms and ministries has been repeatedly mentioned. They are expressed both in the gifts that enrich the consecrated life, and in the very varied gifts of the various laity. For this reason, it is necessary to *“review the structure of the Church so that it is a community of communities, recognizing the unity in the mission with the diversity of the ministries that the Holy Spirit gives through gifts to each of its members, according to their vocation not to oppose the charismatic dimension with the institutional dimension” (Bolivariana).*
84. However, an “all ministerial” Church is not necessarily an “all instituted ministerial” Church. legitimately exist

many ministries that spring from the baptismal vocation, including spontaneous ministries and others recognized, that are not instituted, and others that are instituted with their training, mission, and stability.

Some indigenous peoples even indicated that they have their own ministries, which are already lived, but which are not recognized by the ecclesiastical institution.

85. A profound community discernment is required regarding what ministries need to be created or promoted in light of the signs of the times, especially among the laity. These should not be only to meet the internal needs of the Church, but as a *"response and service to the world"* (Camex), because *"the mission of Christians, above all, is in the world"* (Ceama-Repam). Here resounds the voice of Pope Francis who, in the exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, speaks of "a markedly lay ecclesial culture" (QA 94). We must value and promote *"the service of the laity in the construction of the world, of the economy, politics, sciences, arts, etc."* as an essential dimension for *"the Church to be a People wholly prophetic, priestly and regal"* (Caribe, Ceama-Repam).

86. A central issue is to foster the participation in decision-making scenarios of the laity and, especially, of women and young people. There is a majority presence of women because *"they are the ones who support the Church the most"* (Camex) but, on the other hand, they are the ones who *"need openness to incorporation and participation in decision-making spheres"* (Southern Cone). There are contributions that indicate that these spaces already exist in some of our local churches, but others have *"the feeling that women are 'cheap labor' within the Church"* (Southern Cone) and it is *"necessary to create and institute new ministries, especially for women"* (Ceama-Repam). Many voices consider the institution of the female diaconate urgent, recognizing what is lived in various communities.

87. The priestly ministry has gone through a profound path of renewal since Vatican II. However, the complaint about clericalism arises repeatedly, understood as the expression of clerical authoritarianism, as the distortion of the ministerial service in abuse of power. This affects not only the ordained priesthood, but also

it is a temptation for all the ministers of the Church, even the laity. *"We see the need to think about a conversion within the Church that overcomes clericalism and machismo that excludes women from discernment and decision-making processes, and that it is something cultural that we have to face, even if we have to go against current. Fraternity and sisterhood is what must be cultivated"* (Southern Cone. Ceama-Repam).

88. For this reason it is important *"to take steps to overcome clericalism in the laity and in the clergy, assuming our mission from the principle of subsidiarity as a synodal way of proceeding"* (Bolivariana). The Church is more synodal when it walks with all the baptized and encourages them to live the mission, recognizing common dignity as the basis for the renewal of ecclesial life and with ministries in which authority is service. *"Authority as a service builds interdependence (neither dependency nor independence) from the common vocation as disciples"* (Bolivariana).
89. The revaluation of life and baptismal dignity, as the primary source of all ministries, requires a new institutional model that counteracts the pyramidal model that clericalism facilitates. Synodality offers the appropriate interpretative framework to think about the renewal of the ordained ministry, which supposes, among other things, *"discerning the ministry of all the People of God in the key of co-responsibility"* and living *"ministeriality as an alliance with the poor"* (Southern Cone).
90. This also implies rethinking the ordained ministry model. There are those who say that in their communities there is a *"conflict between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood"*, as well as *"priesthood modalities that do not respond to the needs of the People of God"* (Camex). *"We do not know how to articulate lay and ordained ministeriality"* (Caribe). In this way, if we want a more synodal and missionary Church, *"it is necessary to rethink the profile of ministries, especially ordained ministers, so that they exercise their ministry 'in' the community and not 'on' it"*, with a formation *"closely related to the pastoral processes and the life of the peoples they are going to serve"* (Ceama-Repam).
91. In this area of the ordained ministry, several voices have stated that *"we need an open and sincere dialogue about whether the topic of the*

celibacy and its relationship with the priestly ministry” (Caribbean). In addition, the possibility of the priestly ordination of permanent deacons has been favorably considered, as well as some have raised “the service and inclusion of married priests and members of the consecrated life who left their institutes” (Southern Cone).

92. In particular, it is requested that the general assembly in October address this issue, promoting the review of theology and the forms of a ministerial Church, the training and profile of ministers, instituted and ordained, and the opening of some ministries to women.
93. The consecrated life, present in the Regional Assemblies, is aware of the action of the Spirit and perceives a strong call to be-walk in communion with the Church, which is a community of equal disciples -by baptism-, and share ministries, vocations and charisms for the construction of the Kingdom. It is born in the Church, it grows, and it is called to bear evangelical fruit in the living communion of the faithful People of God, for which reason it yearns to “ *continue nourishing the experience of synodality and be an engine to energize it in the various contexts and communities.*” *local communities of belonging, in which it is constitutively called to be a synodal prophetic presence expressed in community meetings, Chapters, Assemblies, pastoral services, etc.” (Caribbean).* The consecrated men and women commit themselves to live as a Church in outgoing and centered on the Gospel, and -therefore- poorer, missionary, rooted in contexts, pneumatocentric and in constant dialogue with reality.
94. Synodality and consecrated life are interlinked in the path of conversion, listening and mission, with the criteria of participation and co-responsibility, which also define the identity and nature of the Church itself. The hierarchical and charismatic gifts walk together to “*unlearn and eradicate any attitude of dependency, submission and silence within communities, Churches and society; and to remove the clericalism introduced in the way we relate to the other members of the Church. For this reason, we try to rescue and value the synodal experiences that have been lived for some time in some churches in Latin America to apply them in a renewed way in our here and now” (Bolivariana) .*

8. Contributions of the Latin American and Caribbean synodal itinerary



95. In the Narrative of the regional assemblies and in the Introduction to this synthesis we point out peculiarities of the synodal itinerary of the Latin American and Caribbean Church. In the development of the seven previous themes, we collected the main contributions of the assemblies and the summaries for *the Instrumentum laboris*. Now, as a projective recapitulation, we raise four central questions.
96. (I) Both the text of our first Ecclesial Assembly and the Document for the continental stage promote a missionary synodal Church. The first question concerns the mutual relations between ecclesiality, synodality, ministeriality and collegiality. Throughout the Assembly process we feel the reciprocal fecundity and positive tension between synodal ecclesiality and episcopal collegiality. The recent walk of the People of God among us, the discernment of the voices and expressions of the *sensus fidei fidelium*, the responsible and co-responsible participation of all, presents the appropriate interpretative framework - theoretical and practical - to listen to each other, dialogue and discern together from the common dignity received in the

filial and fraternal grace of baptism. Our experience shows that in this horizon of communion the exercise of the episcopal ministry is enriched as a pastoral service to the People of God. We are learning that, if the ministry of the bishops is not located within a synodal ecclesiality, it can be impoverished by not receiving the fruits of a broad exchange and by feeling threatened as if synodality were a democratization that questions the hierarchical institution of church. In a process lived synodally, the elaboration and decision-making by the competent authorities grows in legitimacy and favors a more positive reception from the community.

97. Within this framework, a question arises that should be analyzed in the next Synodal Assembly with spiritual discernment, theological scope and pastoral sense. It is about the mutual relations between ecclesiality, synodality, ministeriality and collegiality. This can be deepened from the central role of the Spirit of God in the life and mission of the Church. In a synodal key, it is possible to analyze the theology of the sacraments, especially Baptism and Holy Orders, the reciprocal relationships between the common priesthood and the ordained ministry, and the reforms to the ministries and structures of the Church, including the reform of the ministry of the Successor of Peter.
98. (II) The emergence of a renewed synodal ecclesiality drives the challenge of imagining synodal reforms in mentalities, attitudes, practices, relationships and ecclesial structures. The novelties of the Ecclesial Conference for the Amazon and the first Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean show that the creation of new institutions is not enough, but must be accompanied by awareness and formation that help to articulate the communion in novel forms of community participation, organic, dynamic. It is not possible to bring to fruition the motions of the Spirit for the Church of the third millennium without a spirituality of synodal communion.
99. We need to assume in a synodal way the orientations of the Council Vatican II for a permanent renewal of the Church in her fidelity to Jesus Christ and her evangelizing mission to the peoples. exhorts her-

tion to conciliate to be an *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (UR 4, 6), or an *Ecclesia semper purificanda* (LG 8), are a source of inspiration for the next Assembly to renew synodality as communion, participation and mission. In the new synodal context, the Latin American and Caribbean Church continues to welcome that so-called conciliation as a path of pastoral and missionary conversion.

100. In this process, questions arise that are not new, but they acquire renewed relevance. What is the magisterial value of the results of the Ecclesial Assemblies? Would they not have greater validation and acceptance if they were presented as guidelines and documents for all the People of God in a region, because they are the fruits of listening, dialogue and common discernment? What would happen if some decisions of an Assembly were rejected by the episcopal instance? When, how and where should advisory and deliberative votes be given? Can you dream of a synodal configuration of Episcopal Conferences and continental structures like CELAM? By the way, here spiritual discernment, theological foundation and canon law must be articulated.
101. (III) Since the Second Vatican Council and based on the method used by the pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, a great contribution of the Latin American and Caribbean Church has been in the way of reflecting on the faith and guiding evangelization not only through the service of bishops and theologians, but also through the contributions of the Sinodal tradition of the People of God. The teaching of the last popes directs us to learn from the *sensus fidei* of the faithful as a whole, at the same time that it supports the proper service of those who teach the faith of the Church with apostolic authority. It seems to us that the Synod should consider the admirable exchange between the magisterium of the People of God, pastors and theologians.
102. The see-judge-act method has acquired citizenship in the Latin American and Caribbean Church, as expressed in the Aparecida Document (cf. DAp 19). It has been fine-tuned, and now it has been enriched with the method of spiritual conversation, at the same time as

the former enriches the latter. In this horizon we speak of the circular and progressive process configured by the respective moments of seeing - listening - contemplating, judging - discerning - interpreting, and acting - responding - projecting.

103. The background of our hermeneutical method is the conviction that God communicates himself in history and has spoken fully through his Son Jesus Christ, that his Word is transmitted in Sacred Scripture received and communicated in the Tradition of the Church, and that God it continues to speak through historical events, especially through the signs that mark the present time. In the magisterium of Latin America and the Caribbean, history, theology and pastoral ministry are enriched mutually.
104. The Synodal Assembly could synodally deepen community discernment in listening to the Spirit and historical-pastoral hermeneutics in the light of the Gospel of Christ, at all levels and in all ecclesial subjects, in accordance with the conciliar teaching (cf. GS 11, 44).
105. (IV) The pilgrim Church in Latin America and the Caribbean recognizes itself as a Church of churches and a community of communities. In the councils and synods of the first evangelization, and in the post-conciliar conferences of our Episcopate, valuable exchanges took place between the local churches, the episcopal conferences and the regional instances, which were promoted by CELAM. In his teaching, Pope Francis refers to local, regional and universal synodality, and at this moment we are going through a process that starts from the local churches, is enriched in the national conferences, now reaching continental dimensions, and in the Assembly it will live on the level of the entire Church. Francis includes in his encyclicals, exhortations and speeches local ecclesial experiences and the magisterium of episcopal conferences, such as the Document of Aparecida (cf. EG 25, 122).
106. The call to live and act synodally urges us to resignify the mutual implications between the particular and the universal, the value of the experience

ecclesial activity in the peripheries and its impact on the whole, the fair and tense balances between local, national, regional and global priorities, and the challenge of opening up to harmony, the work of the Spirit. The next Assembly can focus on these questions: How to integrate the peculiar riches in the beauty of the whole? How to respect the rhythms and demands of those who walk slower? How to overcome a predominantly vertical practice, where individual churches seem subservient, with a true communion of churches in universal catholicity?

107. The text of the Ecclesial Assembly teaches: *“Since the beginning of our American ecclesial history, the Mother of God sustains the hope of the people on the continent and is the great spiritual link in all of America”* (AE 224). Our believing people, spiritually and affectively Marian from its Guadalupan origins and in all its local expressions, feel and know that *“there is a Marian style in the evangelizing activity of the Church. Because every time we look at María we believe again in the revolutionary nature of tenderness and affection... This dynamic of justice and tenderness, of contemplating and walking toward others, is what makes her an ecclesial model for evangelization”* (EG 288). From the heart of faith and piety of our Church we ask the Virgin Mother to support us in the hope of the synodal path because she is *“queen and mother of mercy, life, sweetness and our hope”*.

ACRONYM

BUT	Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean. "Towards a Church but an exit to the peripheries. Reflections and pastoral proposals from the First Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean. (2022).
Ap.	Bible: Book of Revelation
BOLIVARIAN	Meeting of the Bolivarian Region (February 27 to March 3)
CAMEX	Meeting of the Central America and Mexico Region (February 13 to 17, 2023)
CARIBBEAN	Meeting of the Caribbean Region (February 20 to 25, 2023)
CEMA-REPAM	Contribution of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon and the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network
CELAM	Latin American Episcopal Council
SOUTH CONE	Meeting of the Southern Cone Region (March 6 to 9, 2023)
CTI Synodality	International Theological Commission, Document: Synodality in the life and mission of the Church (2018)
AND	Concluding Document of the V. General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops in Aparecida (2007)
DOC. PREP.	Synod on Synodality (2021-2024): Preparatory Document. For a synodal Church: communion, participation, mission Document for
DEC	the Continental Stage. Synod on Synodality (2024): "Widen the space of your tent"
EG	Apostolic Exhortation <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> of Pope Francis
IN	Apostolic exhortation <i>to announce the Gospel</i> of Pablo VI.
Hch	Bible: Book of the Acts of the Apostles
Is	Bible: Book of the Prophet Isaiah
LG	Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church <i>Lumen gentium</i> ,
LGTBIQ+	Terminology of diversity in sexual orientations; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer and others
QA	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Querida Amazonia</i> (2020) by Pope Francisco
REDCHAG	Ecclesiastical Network of the Great Chaco and the Guarani Aquifer
REMAM	Mesoamerican Ecclesial Ecological Network
REPAM	Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network
SD	Fourth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (1992)
SN	Synthesis of the Continental Phase of the Synod of Synodality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Decree <i>Unitatis redintegratio</i> on ecumenism (1964) of Paul VI.

