



On October 1st 2018, the Instruction on the celebration of the Synodal Assemblies and on the activity of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops was published, in accordance with art. 26 of the new Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis *Episcopalis communio* (September 15th 2018).

It is a text of an essentially practical character and, for this reason, must be read and understood together with the Pontifical Document from which it originates. Since the recent Apostolic Constitution takes the place of the Motu Proprio *Apostolica sollicitudo* of St. Paul VI, this new Instruction replaces the *Ordo Synodi Episcoporum*, which in the course of almost fifty years has known different editions, the last of which was approved by Benedict XVI in 2006.

A significant number of the articles of the previous *Ordo* can be seen reflected in this new Instruction published on October 1st. This is a sign that the restructuring process of the synodal organism, which has been desired by Pope Francis from the beginning of his pontificate, is not a break with the past, but is undertaken as a sign of continuity in development.

The articles of this Instruction follow a sequential order, as shown by its two parts. The **first part** deals with the following themes: the Roman Pontiff; the members or synodal fathers designated for the different types of assembly; the General Secretariat with its Councils; the commissions and organisms in place during the Synod Assemblies, that is to say: the President Delegate, the General Rapporteur, the Special Secretary, the Commission for Information, the Redaction Committee for the project of the Final Document, the Study Commissions and the Commission for controversies.

The **second part** of the Instruction, on the other hand, deals with the procedures: it is here that, amongst other things, the discussion of topics in the General Congregations and in the Minor Circles, as well as the voting process in the Circles, in the Redaction Committee for the project of the Final Document and in the Synodal Assembly as a whole are regulated.

However, in this Instruction there are also some significant developments. This is keeping in line with the renewal sanctioned by *Episcopalis communion*, which in turn has incorporated and clarified the innovations actually introduced by the Synodal Assemblies themselves held during the pontificate of Pope Francis.

One of these that stands out in particular is the enlargement of the General Secretariat of the Synod. The Ordinary Council will now be made up of twenty-one Bishops, sixteen of whom will be elected by the Ordinary General Assembly. Among the latter, one bishop will come from the Eastern Catholic Churches and the other fifteen from the Latin Rite Churches according to their geographical origin: two bishops will be from and represent North America, three will be from and represent Latin America, three will be from and represent Europe, three will be from and represent Africa, three will be from and represent Asia and one will be from and represent Oceania.

As per *Episcopalis communio* (Article 24, § 2), only diocesan bishops may be elected. This is in keeping with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, which called for the establishment of a permanent central body of pastors responsible for particular churches to assist the Pope. The elected members are joined by the Head of the Dicastery of the Roman Curia whose competency pertains most to the theme of the Synodal Assembly which is chosen by the Holy Father and by four other members of pontifical nomination.

In conclusion, more than its individual aspects, what must be emphasized is the general orientation which, in keeping with *Episcopalis communio*, animates this Instruction: all functions and procedures are regulated with the aim of facilitating as much as possible the debate and exchange of opinions among the Synod Fathers. This serves highlighting the richness contained in the voices of the churches scattered throughout the earth. Thus, the Synod is configured for all intents and purposes as a special expression of the indissoluble bond which unites the Bishops among themselves and with the Pope in their service to the People of God.

Instruction on the celebration of Synodal Assemblies and on the activity of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops

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PART I PERSONS

Chapter I

The Roman Pontiff

Art. 1

The authority of the Roman Pontiff

§1.

The Synod of Bishops is directly subject to the authority of the Roman Pontiff, to whom it therefore belongs:

1° to convoke a Synod of Bishops as often as it seems to him opportune, and designate the place where the Synod Assemblies are to be held;

2° to determine at suitable time before the celebration of a Synod one or more themes to be discussed also consulting the Episcopate according to the means he judges most appropriate;

3° to ratify the election of Members, and appoint other members;

4° to preside over the Synod Assemblies personally or through others;

5° to decide on the Final Document;

6° to ratify and, if he deems it opportune, to promulgate the Final Document when, in determined cases, the Synod has been given deliberative power;

7° to conclude, revise, transfer, suspend, and to dissolve the Synod.

§ 2.

If the Apostolic See becomes vacant or impeded after the convocation of the Synod Assembly or during its celebration, the Synod is immediately suspended, until the new Pontiff establishes whether to continue it or to dissolve it.

Chapter II

Members or Synodal Fathers

Art. 2

Members of the Ordinary General Assembly

The Members of the Ordinary General Assembly are:

1° a) Patriarchs, Major Archbishops, Metropolitans of the Metropolitan Churches *sui iuris* of the Eastern Catholic Churches or, if unable, a Bishop who has a certain competence on the theme to be treated in the Synodal Assembly, and designated by the Patriarch, Major Archbishop or Metropolitan of the Metropolitan Church *sui iuris*, with the consensus of the Synod of Bishops or the Council of the Hierarchy of the Church over which they preside;

b) Bishops elected by the Synods of Bishops and by the Councils of the Hierarchy of the Eastern Catholic Churches;

c) Bishops elected by the Episcopal Conferences;

2° Members of the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops;

3° The Heads of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia invested with the episcopal *munus*, and designated by the Roman Pontiff;

4° ten Clerics belonging to Institutes of consecrated life, elected by the respective representative bodies of the Superiors General;

5° certain others appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

Art. 3

Members of the Extraordinary General Assembly

The Members of the Extraordinary General Assembly are:

1° a) Patriarchs, Major Archbishops, Metropolitans of the Metropolitan Churches *sui iuris* of the Eastern Catholic Churches or, if unable, a Bishop, designated according to the norms of art. 2, 1° a);

b) Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences, or, if unable, the first Vice-President;

2° Bishops members of the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the preparation of the Extraordinary General Assembly;

3° The Heads of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia invested with the episcopal *munus*, and designated by the Roman Pontiff;

4° three Supreme Moderators of Institutes of consecrated life, elected by the respective representative bodies of the Superiors General;

5° certain others appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

Art. 4

Members of the Special Assembly

The Members of the Special Assembly are:

1° a) Patriarchs, Major Archbishops, Metropolitans of the Metropolitan Churches *sui iuris* of the Eastern Catholic Churches or, if unable, a Bishop, designated according to the norms of art. 2, 1° a), who have ecclesiastical circumscriptions in the geographical areas on whose behalf the Assembly is convoked;

b) Bishops belonging to the geographical areas for which the Synod of Bishops is convoked, and designated in the manner determined by the Roman Pontiff.;

2° Bishops members of the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the preparation of the Special Assembly;

3° The Heads of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia invested with the episcopal *munus*, and designated by the Roman Pontiff;

4° some Clerics belonging to Institutes of consecrated life, elected by the respective representative bodies of the Superiors General, designated in the number and manner established by the Roman Pontiff;

5° certain others named by the Roman Pontiff.

Art. 5

Members of other types of Assemblies

According to art. 1 § 3, of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, the Roman Pontiff may convene a Synodal Assembly according to other formats established by himself. The Roman Pontiff is also competent to determine the methods for the designation of the Synodal Members.

Art. 6

Members of pontifical nomination in all Assemblies

At the individual Assemblies also participate Members, Bishops or Clerics from Institutes of consecrated life or some other Clerics who have a certain expertise in the material to be treated in the Synodal Assemblies, appointed by the Roman Pontiff, up to 15% of the number of Members designated as *ex officio* and *ex electione*.

Art. 7

The Election of Members

§ 1.

1º The Members of the Ordinary General Assembly, in conformity to the norms of art. 2, 1º, *b*) and *c*), as well as their Substitutes, are to be elected by their individual Synod of Bishops, Councils of the Hierarchy of the Eastern Catholic Churches and Episcopal Conferences in plenary session and by secret ballot.

2º Such elections are held according to the norms set down in can. 119, 1º of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.* If more than one Member is to be elected, a ballot for each single election is required.

3º The number of Members to be elected is determined as follows:

a) one representative (and one alternate) for each Synod of Bishops or Council of the Hierarchy of the Eastern Catholic Churches which might have 26 to 50 members; two representatives (and one alternate) having more than 50 members;

b) one representative (and one alternate) for each Episcopal Conference that does not exceed 25 members; two representatives (and one alternates) having 26 to 50 members; three representatives (and two alternates) having 51 to 100 members; four representatives (and two alternates) having 101 to 200 members; five representatives (and three alternates) having more than 200 members.

4° In electing Bishops, great attention should be given not only to their general knowledge and prudence, but also to their theoretical and practical knowledge of the matter to be treated in the Assembly.

5° The Heads of the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences are to communicate to the General Secretary the names of those who are elected through the Pontifical Representative of the respective Nation, at least five months before the opening of the Assembly.

§ 2.

1° The election of the Members of the Institutes of consecrated life for the different types of Assembly is to be held according to the procedure mentioned in § 1, 2° of this Article.

2° In electing Members of the Institutes of consecrated life, attention should be given not only to their general knowledge and prudence, but also to their theoretical and practical knowledge of the matter to be treated in the Assembly.

3° The President of the respective representative body of the Superiors General is to communicate the names of those who are elected to the General Secretary, at least five months before the opening of the Assembly.

§ 3.

1° Such elections are to be confirmed by the Roman Pontiff.

2° The names of those elected are not to be made known to the public until their election is ratified by the Roman Pontiff.

Chapter III

The General Secretariat

Art. 8

The General Secretary

§ 1.

The General Secretary, appointed by the Roman Pontiff according to art. 1 § 3, of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, manages and directs all the activities of the General Secretariat. Moreover, in the case of absence of the Roman Pontiff, he presides over the meetings, and undersigns all its acts.

§ 2.

The General Secretary appoints the Officials of the Secretariat, who depend on him.

§ 3.

It is equally the responsibility of the General Secretary to communicate to the Roman Pontiff all matters related to the activities of the General Secretariat.

§ 4.

In the preparatory phase of the Synod Assembly, it is for the General Secretary:

1° to publish the Documents needed to begin the preparatory phase of the Synod Assembly, according to the norms of art. 6 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, and collect the results of the ecclesial consultation, according to art. 7 of that Apostolic Constitution;

2° to convoke the Pre-Synodal Meeting, according to the norms of art. 8 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

3° to establish and preside over the Preparatory Commission, according to art. 10 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

4° to communicate and publish the appointment by the Roman Pontiff of the President-Delegate, the Relator General and the Special Secretary for each Assembly;

5° to submit the list of the Members elected to the Roman Pontiff, according to the norms of art. 3 of the present Instruction, for the necessary ratification;

6° to communicate and publish the names of the Synodal Fathers designated or appointed by the Roman Pontiff;

7° to appoint Experts, Auditors and, if any, Special Guests, having heard the Relator General and the Special Secretary of the Assembly;

8° to publish the names of the Fraternal Delegates designed by their respective Churches and Ecclesial Communities not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church;

9° to ensure all the Documents of the Synod Assembly are transmitted sufficiently in advance to the Synod Fathers;

10° to draw up and publish the Regulations of the Synod Assembly.

§ 5.

In the celebratory phase of the Synod Assembly, it is for the General Secretary:

1° to present an initial Report on the work of the preparatory phase, and to explain the procedures to be followed during the Assembly;

2° to prepare and communicate the Synodal Working Calendar, and to distribute according to an opportune criterion all the Members among the General Congregations and the Small Group Sessions, according to art. 14 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

3° to determine the order and the maximum duration of the interventions of the Synodal Fathers during the General Congregations;

4° to establish the Small Groups, and communicate their composition, according to art. 14 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

5° to provide all information regarding the various procedural aspects of the Assembly;

6° to ensure the norms established are carefully observed during the work of the Assembly;

7° to promote active participation of the Members, as well as to oversee the adequate distribution of tasks during the Synod;

8° to preserve carefully the acts in appropriate archives.

§ 6.

In the implementation phase of the Synod Assembly, it is for the General Secretary:

1° to collaborate with the Head of the Dicastery of the Roman Curia competent for the theme of the Synod in promoting the implementation of the Synodal recommendations, according to art. 20 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

2° to establish and preside over the Commission for implementation, according to the norms of art. 21 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*;

Art. 9

The Undersecretary

§ 1.

The Undersecretary cooperates with the General Secretary in all his activities.

§ 2.

It is the task of the Undersecretary, through his collaborators, to collect and distribute all the acts and documents of the Synod Assembly.

§ 3.

The notifications of absence are received personally by the Undersecretary, who in turn transmits them to the President-Delegate and to the General Secretary.

Art. 10

The Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat

§ 1.

The Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat is comprised of 21 Members.

§ 2.

According to art. 24 § 2 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, one Member is elected among the Heads and the Eparchial Bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches who are members of the Ordinary General Assembly.

§ 3.

Fifteen Members are elected from the diocesan Bishops of the Latin rite who are members of the Ordinary General Assembly: two Bishops whose sees are located in North America, three whose sees are located in Latin America, three whose sees are located in Europe, three whose sees are located in Africa, three whose sees are located in Asia, one whose see is located in Oceania.

§ 4.

According to art. 24 § 2 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, it also includes the Head of the Dicastery of the Roman Curia that has competence for the theme of the Synod established by the Roman Pontiff as well as four Bishops appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

§ 5.

Such elections are held before the conclusion of the Ordinary General Assembly, by secret ballot, in accordance with the provisions of can. 119, 1º of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.*, and a ballot for each single election is required.

§ 6.

The Ordinary Council is convoked by the General Secretary as often as opportune.

Art. 11

The other Councils of the General Secretariat

§ 1.

The Councils for the preparation of the Extraordinary General Assembly and of the Special Assembly, as referred to in art. 25 § 3, of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, are convoked by the General Secretary as often as opportune.

§ 2.

1º The Councils of the General Secretariat for the implementation of the Extraordinary General Assembly and the Special Assembly, as referred to in art. 25 § 1, of the Apostolic Constitution,

Episcopalis communio, consist of fifteen Members, twelve of whom are elected by the respective Assembly according to the criteria established by the Roman Pontiff, while others are appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

2° Such Councils are convoked by the General Secretary as often as opportune.

Chapter IV

Tasks and Bodies during the Synod Assemblies

Art. 12

The President-Delegate

§ 1.

The President-Delegate presides over the Assembly of the Synod in the name and by the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

§ 2.

If the Roman Pontiff has delegated several persons to preside over the Assembly, they exercise their office in turns according to the order established by the Roman Pontiff in the act of appointment.

§ 3.

At the conclusion of the work of the Assembly, the function of the President-Delegate ceases.

Art. 13

The Relator General

§ 1.

At the beginning of the Synod Assembly, the Relator General presents a Report introducing the theme to be treated; as well as to explain the Synodal working Document and specify the points on which the synodal discussion will focus.

§ 2.

This Report should be submitted suitably in advance before the beginning of the Synod Assembly to the General Secretary.

§ 3.

During the work of the Synod, the Relator General presides over the preparation of the Final Document to be submitted for the approval of the Synodal Fathers, and then presents it in the General Congregation.

§ 4.

If circumstances so indicate, the Relator General presents a summary of the topics that emerge during the Synodal discussions, as well as clarifying certain points and providing information on the elaboration of the Final Document.

§ 5.

With the dissolution of the Assembly the function of the Relator General ceases.

Art. 14

The Special Secretary

§ 1.

The Special Secretary assists the Relator General in all his activities, by virtue of his competence on the theme of the Synod, coordinating, under the direction of the Relator General, the work of the Experts and the redaction of the Final Document.

§ 2.

If circumstances so indicate, additional Special Secretaries may be appointed.

§ 3.

The Special Secretary is at the disposal of the Roman Pontiff, the President-Delegate, the Relator General and the General Secretary for preparing documents and providing information before the Synodal Fathers. If expressly designated an Expert may also be invited to speak by virtue of his competence on the themes under discussion in the Synod Hall.

§ 4.

With the dissolution of the Assembly the function of the Special Secretary ceases.

Art. 15

The Commission for Information

§ 1.

The Commission for Information is composed of the President and the Secretary appointed by the Roman Pontiff, the General Secretary, the Undersecretary, the Special Secretary, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, the Director of the Holy See Press Office, as well as five Members elected by the Assembly according to the Regulations of the Synod Assembly.

§ 2.

The Commission for Information establishes the criteria and manner of providing information.

§ 3.

Press conferences on individual matters are to be given by Synod Fathers designated by the President of the Commission.

Art. 16

The Commission for the redaction of the Final Document

§ 1.

At the beginning of the Synod Assembly, the Commission for the redaction of the Final Document is to be established, as referred to in art. 17 § 2, of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*.

§ 2.

The Commission for the redaction of the Final Document is composed of the Relator General, who chairs it; the General Secretary; the Special Secretary, who is the secretary; five Members elected to represent the different continental areas (one from America, one from Europe, one from Africa, one from Asia, one from Oceania); certain others appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

§ 3.

The election of the Members of the Commission for the redaction of the Final Document is held according to the norms set down in can. 119, 1º of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.*, by a ballot for each single election.

Art. 17

The Study Commissions

§ 1.

The Study Commissions, as referred to in art. 16 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, are comprised of eleven Members and other Participants, specialists on the subject, of which eight are elected by the Assembly and three are appointed by the Roman Pontiff.

§ 2.

The election of the Members of the Study Commissions is held according to the norms set down in can. 119, 1º of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.*, by a ballot for each single election.

§ 3.

The President and the Secretary of the Study Commissions are elected by and among their members, according to the norms set down in can. 119, 1º of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.*

§ 4.

Once the Study Commission has reached its conclusions, the President presents them to the Synod Assembly.

Art. 18

The Commission for Controversies

At the beginning of each Assembly, the Roman Pontiff is to establish a Commission of three Members with the task of examining in a suitable manner any controversies that have been presented, and then to submit them to the Roman Pontiff himself.

Art. 19

The Appointment of Members in the Commissions

Any Synod Father can be elected as a Member of a Commission with the exception of the President-Delegate, the General Secretary, the Undersecretary, the Relator General, and the Special Secretary, while avoiding assigning many tasks to any one Member.

Art. 20

Tasks and bodies of the Special Assembly and other types of Assembly

The Regulations of the Special Assembly or the Assembly provided for by art. 1 § 3 of the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio*, may derogate from the constitution of the aforementioned tasks and bodies, and determine which others are, if necessary, to be established.

PART II PROCEDURES

Chapter I
Liturgies, Vesture, Precedence, Languages, Absences,
Secrecy, Procedural Vote, Manner of Voting

Art. 21

Liturgical celebrations during the Assembly

§ 1.

The Synod Assembly is opened with the celebration of the Eucharist, the enthronement of the Book of the Gospels and the hymn, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*.

§ 2.

The Synodal Assembly, gathered in the General Congregation or in the Small Groups, is opened every day with the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.

§ 3.

The Synod Assembly is closed with the singing of the *Te Deum* and the celebration of the Eucharist.

Art. 22

Attire to be Worn at the Assembly

During the General Congregations, the Members, to whom it pertains, are to wear the cassock consistent with their office; others are to wear their proper vesture.

Art. 23

The Order of Precedence

For establishing precedence, the prescriptions of the canons and custom are to be observed.

Art. 24

The official Languages of the Assembly

The official languages of the assembly are to be communicated sufficiently in advance to the Members.

Art. 25

The Obligation to Notify Absence

Whoever is unable to attend individual meetings are to make the reason for his absence known to the President-Delegate and the General Secretary through the Undersecretary.

Art. 26

The Obligation of Secrecy

All those who participate in the Synod bound to pontifical secrecy as regards both the opinions and votes of individuals.

Art. 27

The Procedural Voting

Questions of procedure are resolved each time by an absolute majority of the voting Members.

Art. 28

The Manner of Voting

The manner of voting is determined by the General Secretariat.

Chapter II

Discussion of the Themes

Art. 29

The Discussion of the themes in the General Congregations

§ 1.

1° After the Reports of the General Secretary and the Relator General, and at the beginning of each successive General Congregation, the President-Delegate announces the topic for discussion and, according to the list prepared by the General Secretariat, calls upon the Members to speak who have asked for the floor.

2° The Fathers who have petitioned to speak, are expected to refer explicitly to the working Document presented by the Relator General, and submit sufficiently in advance their interventions in writing to the General Secretariat. In addition, the Synod Fathers are to adhere to the maximum duration of individual interventions established by the General Secretary.

3° Although there is no binding mandate, it is desirable that the Synod Fathers, appointed by office or by election, should be the bearers of the opinion expressed by the Bodies they represent and of the consultation carried out at the particular Churches from which they come, in accordance with n. 6 of the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio*.

4° On one and the same question, only one Father is to speak in the name of the Bodies he represents.

§ 2.

If many have requested to speak, the Fathers are asked not to repeat what has already been stated, but to refer to it briefly.

§ 3.

The interventions of the Synod Fathers submitted in writing to the General Secretariat will be taken into account in the same manner as interventions given in the Hall.

§ 4.

1° A free exchange of views among the Members on the matters under discussion, as referred to in art. 15 § 2 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, takes place according to the methods established by General Secretary in conjunction with the President-Delegate.

2° On that occasion a Synod Father, after having listened to the opinions of others, may respond or make objections.

3° The speakers have the right to speak in the name of a group of Members; in such case, they ought to indicate in whose name they are speaking.

§ 5.

It is the role of the President-Delegate to grant permission to speak to the Auditors, Fraternal Delegates and Special Guests, if any, according to art. 15 § 3 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*.

Art. 30

The Discussion of the themes in the Small Groups

§ 1.

In addition to the General Congregations, the discussion of the topics continues in Small Groups established according to the art. 14 of the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio*. These Groups meet for a reasonable number of sessions.

§ 2.

The Small Groups are established according to the language spoken. Individual Synod Fathers participate in the Group assigned to them considering the various languages chosen. All Groups are to treat the same topics.

§ 3.

The Auditors, Fraternal Delegates and Special Guests, if any, take part in the Small Groups at the invitation of the Moderator, without voting rights. Experts can also participate in meetings of the Small Groups providing clarifications, when necessary, by virtue of their competence.

§ 4.

The purpose of the discussion of the Synodal Fathers in the Small Groups is to bring about a general consensus, or at least the widest possible consensus, which is expressed in the elaboration of the collective *modi*. However, any opposing or different opinions must always be taken into account.

Art. 31

The Moderator, the Reporter and the Secretary of the Small Groups

§ 1.

In each Small Group, the Synod Fathers elect from among themselves a Moderator and a Reporter. Such elections take place at the beginning of the first session according to the norms set down in can. 119, 1^o of the *C.I.C.* and can. 956, § 1 of the *C.C.E.O.*

§ 2.

It is for the Moderator of each Small Group:

- to announce the topics assigned;
- to guide the discussion;
- to ensure the discussion does not digress from the topic and questions assigned;

- to promote active participation of the Members;
- to decide what topics should be given priority when time is limited, and determine how much time should be given for interventions;
- to preside over the voting procedure.

§ 3.

It is for the Reporter of each Small Group:

- to summarize the opinions expressed at the end of each session, both *pro* and *con*;
- to oversee the formulation of *modi* that reflect the prevailing opinions of Group Members;
- to prepare a Report, at the end of the discussion containing all opinions expressed, both *pro* and *con*;
- to present the Report in the Assembly.

§ 4.

The Secretary of each Small Group is to be an Assistant of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.

It is for the Secretary of each Small Group:

- to assist the Moderator and the Reporter;
- to fulfill any requests on the part of the Members of the Group;
- to draw up a written report on the proceedings of the Group to be submitted to the General Secretariat.

Art. 32

Voting in the Small Groups and Report in the Hall

§ 1.

1° At the end of the discussion on the assigned topic, the Members of the Small Group vote on the *modi*, as referred to in art. 30 § 4.

2° The votes on the *modi* are expressed with the formula *placet, non placet*.

3° The *modi* are approved by an absolute majority of the Synod Fathers who are Members of the Small Group present at the voting, and then transmitted to the General Secretariat indicating both the votes in favor and against.

§ 2.

1° Before resuming the General Congregations, the Members of the Small Group vote on the Report formulated by the Reporter.

2° The votes on the Report are expressed with the formula *placet, non placet*.

3° The Report is approved by an absolute majority of the Synod Fathers who are Members of the Small Group present at the voting, and then transmitted to the General Secretariat.

§ 3.

At a time established by the President-Delegate, the Reporters, in the name of the Members of each Small Group, read their Report in the General Congregation.

§ 4.

When the presentation of the Reports of the Small Groups in the General Congregation is concluded, the President-Delegate can grant permission to the Synod Fathers who deemed it necessary to make additions, amendments or explanations regarding the content of the Reports.

§ 5.

After the presentations in the General Congregation, the President-Delegate can promote a discussion in the Synod Hall on the proposals of the Small Groups.

Chapter III The Final Document

Art. 33

Redaction and presentation of the draft of the Final Document

§ 1.

Taking into account the interventions of the Fathers in the Hall and the *modi* approved by the Small Groups, the Relator General, with the help of the Special Secretary and the support of several Experts, presides over the redaction of the draft of the Final Document of the Synod.

§ 2.

It is the duty of the Commission for the redaction of the Final Document to amend and approve the draft of the Final Document. The votes are expressed with the formula *placet, non placet*. The draft is approved by an absolute majority.

§ 3.

It is the task of the Relator General to submit the draft of the Final Document to the Synod Fathers.

Art. 34

Discussion of the draft of the Final Document

§ 1.

After the Synod Fathers had a reasonable time to examine the draft of the Final Document, debate will take place in the Hall.

§ 2.

The President-Delegate, according to a list prepared by the General Secretary, calls upon the Members to speak who have asked for the floor.

§ 3.

The Fathers may present the General Secretariat with *modi* to the draft of the Final Document that they deem necessary. Nothing prevents several Fathers from joining together presenting the *modi*.

Art. 35

Redaction, presentation and approval of the Final Document

§ 1.

Taking into account the *modi* presented, the Relator General, with the help of the Special Secretary and other Members of the Commission for the redaction of the Final Document, prepares the text of the Final Document.

§ 2.

It is the task of the Relator General to submit the Final Document to the Synod Fathers.

§ 3.

The votes on the Final Document are expressed with the formula *placet, non placet*, by secret ballot.

§ 4.

The Final Document is approved by two thirds of the Synod Fathers present at the vote.

§ 5.

Once the approval of the Members has been obtained, the Final Document is presented to the Roman Pontiff, according to art. 18 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*.

Chapter IV Final Fulfilments

Art. 36

Drafting of the Report on the work of the Synod

§ 1.

At the end of the work of the Assembly, the General Secretary prepares a Report which describes the work carried out on the theme assigned or topics examined and the conclusions reached by the Synod Fathers.

§ 2.

Such Report is submitted to the Roman Pontiff by the General Secretary.

Final Provision

In accordance with art. 26 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis communio*, the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops has approved the present Instruction, providing that it enter into force on 1 October 2018 with the publication in *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Given in Rome, from the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, 1 October 2018.

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri

General Secretary

+ Fabio Fabene

Titular Bishop of Montefiascone

Undersecretary

