



SECRETARIA GENERALIS SYNODI

Press Communiqué from the General Secretariat of the Synod

Original text: ITALIAN

This morning, at the end of the Sunday Angelus, the Holy Father announced that the upcoming 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held in two moments, that is, in two sessions, spaced one year apart: the first from October 4 to 29, 2023, the second in October 2024. Pope Francis referred to the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*, which contemplates this possibility (cf. [Article 3](#)).

This decision stems from the desire that the theme of a Synodal Church, because of its breadth and importance, might be the subject of prolonged discernment not only by the members of the Synodal Assembly, but by the whole Church.

Moreover, this choice is in continuity with the ongoing synodal journey, to which the Pope himself referred this morning. The Synod is not an event but a process in which the whole People of God is called to walk together toward what the Holy Spirit helps it to discern as being the Lord's will for his Church.

Therefore, the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will also take on a processual dimension, configuring itself as "a journey within the journey" to foster more mature reflection for the greater good of the Church.

From the very beginning, the General Secretariat of the Synod has chosen the path of listening and discernment, even in the planning and implementation phase of the synodal process. In the coming weeks, we will continue our discernment to better define the celebration of the two sessions of (and the time in-between) the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. We will communicate about this in due time.

This listening process began in 2021 by the local Churches, that is, by the People of God gathered around their Pastors; it has challenged the Bishops' Conferences and Synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches. As many as 112 out of 114 Episcopal Conferences all the Eastern Catholic Churches carried out a discernment regarding what emerged in the particular Churches. Now, it continues with a Continental Stage that will culminate with the celebration of Continental Synodal Assemblies, between January and March 2023. These Continental Synodal Assemblies will be convened to reread the journey made and to continue the listening and discernment, having as their point of departure the *Document for the Continental Stage*, and proceeding in accord with the socio-cultural specificities of their respective regions. Their aim will be to carry out one more step in this spiritual journey.

Vatican City, 16 October 2022