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***Instrumentum Laboris*. A document of the whole Church**

"The IL is not a document of the Holy See, but of the whole Church. It is not a document written at a desk. It is a document in which all are co-authors, each for the part he or she is called to play in the Church, in docility to the Spirit. [...] You will not find in the text a theoretical systematic explanation of synodality, but the fruit of a Church experience, of a journey in which we have all learnt more by walking together and questioning ourselves on the meaning of this experience. I can say that the IL is a text in which no one's voice is missing: that of the Holy People of God; of the Pastors, who have ensured ecclesial discernment with their participation; of the Pope, who has always accompanied us, supported us, encouraged us to move forward. The IL is also an opportunity for the entire People of God to continue the journey that has begun, and an opportunity to involve those who have not been involved so far," said **Cardinal Mario Grech**, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod, speaking this afternoon at the press conference presenting the *Instrumentum laboris* (IL): the working document for the first session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (4-29 October 2023).

For his part, **Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, S.I.**, Archbishop of Luxembourg and General Rapporteur of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, recalled how the IL "is not a document that, after various amendments by the Synod participants, is expected to lead to a final version to be voted on at the end of the Synod. It is not a provisional answer to all the questions on synodality. Rather, it is the result of the synod process at all levels, a result that leads to many questions that the participants of the Synod of Bishops may answer. The structure of the text and the structural dynamic of the synodal assembly are intimately connected".

p. Giacomo Costa, S.I., Consultor of the General Secretariat of the Synod, dwelt on the methodology of the Synodal Assembly, which is itself the fruit of the synodal process "In a surprisingly clear manner [...] the desire emerged to continue using, for listening and discernment in common, the method of conversation in the Spirit, which has profoundly marked the consultative phase of the synodal journey". For the Consultor of the General Secretariat of the Synod, "the Synodal Assembly is called to live a spiritual process of seeking the will of God and not the dynamism of parliamentary bodies, in which debate ends with a vote that divides the majority from the minority". For this reason, the Assembly's work will be structured in five segments, following the dynamics of the IL. Finally, he recalled how the last segment of the work will be dedicated to gathering the fruits and formulating them into a text that makes them communicable. "This is not a conclusion. Between the two sessions, we will continue to walk together in the Churches and between Churches, to reread this experience of the People of God and to promote the necessary deepening [...] The objective of the two sessions remains to present to the Holy Father concrete proposals to grow as a synodal Church. For this reason, it is important to identify which obstacles stand in the way and to deepen those issues on which a sufficient consensus has not yet matured. The year between the two sessions will be of fundamental importance to test how these questions might be addressed and to offer further elements for the discernment of the assembly in October 2024".

Lastly, **Helena Jeppesen-Spuhler** of Lenten Action (Switzerland) and member of the Swiss delegation to the Continental Assembly in Prague, **Sr. Ester Lucas**, member of the Synodal Team of SECAM (Theological Committee) and **Sr. Nadia Coppa, A.S.C.**, President of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) presented three testimonies aimed at showing how the *Instrumentum laboris* will be used to prepare members for the Synodal Assembly in October and the animation of local synodal groups.

The texts of the speeches are available in the original language.

Some photos of the Press Conference are available [here](#).

The *Instrumentum laboris* and other informative material relating to the first session of the XVI Assembly