

Continental Synodal Assembly in Europe: “It is possible to dialogue starting from our differences”



" highlighted in the final communiqué released in Prague at the end of the first part of the European Synodal Assembly. The Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences will meet from 10 to 12 February to review "collegially the synodal experience that has been shared together". During four intense days of consultation and dialogue 200 delegates representing 39 European Bishops' Conferences discussed the ongoing challenges of the Church in Europe. They shared “the pain of the wounds that mark our recent history”, starting with those that “the Church has inflicted through the abuses perpetrated by people who were performing an ecclesial ministry or office, and ultimately the ruthless violence of the aggression war disfiguring Ukraine and the earthquake that devastated Turkey and Syria.”



. At the end of the debates, the Redaction Committee submitted a draft of the final document to the Assembly. The document “is still subject to the “amendments” of the assembly and to some editorial adjustments – CCEE explains in a note -. It will be returned to all participants, after the requested modifications, for possible further revision before being delivered to the General Secretariat of the Synod. “We went through a spiritual experience that it is possible to meet, listen to each other and dialogue starting from our differences and beyond the many obstacles, walls and barriers that our history puts in our way.”, write the delegates. There was virtually unanimous consensus on the intention to continue the journey in a synodal style: “more than a methodology, we consider it a way of life of our Church.”



. Archbishop of Luxembourg and General Rapporteur of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops makes no secret of his great satisfaction. "As we all know," he explains, "Europe has two different religious cultures, Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Therefore, there could have been strong tensions, but this did not happen. We remained brothers and sisters. We want to walk together. We have differing opinions but this diversity does not interfere with each one's profound adherence to Christ." With regard to the major themes brought up during the assembly, the cardinal remarked: "The Church is open to reflect and to pray over these requests. However, inclusiveness is something else, because the Pope said: everyone, everyone. This is clear, at least for me. It's not up for discussion. But with respect to female priesthood, with respect to married priests, we need to pray, to reflect together, to ponder." "We must allow the work of the Holy Spirit to guide us in these decisions", he added. "A decision that is made under pressure will always be a bad decision."



[Archbishop of Vilnius and President of the CCEE, also expressed his appreciation in drawing the final conclusions of the first stage of the Synodal Assembly. "We experienced what it means to be a family, lay and consecrated persons, men and women, priests and bishops. And we experienced what it means to be a European family. And as in every family, there can be differences. We are all different. But we managed to cultivate a climate of respect for each person's dignity, including in our diversity of opinion. And we thank God for that. We thank the Holy Spirit."](#)

