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Synod 2023

NEWSLETTER



Issue Two: Sunday, October 8, 2023

Pope as Synod begins: Truth does not need loud cries to reach people's hearts

At an ecumenical prayer vigil on the eve of the General Assembly of the Synod, which began on Wednesday, October 4, Pope Francis said that the truth “does not need loud cries to reach people’s hearts”. Pope Francis addressed thousands of pilgrims gathered in St Peter’s Square for the vigil.



Pope Francis
at the
ecumenical
prayer vigil

The attendance, including the heads of many Christian churches, gathered to entrust the General Assembly of the Synod to the Holy Spirit.

In his address, delivered toward the end of the vigil, Pope Francis meditated on the topic of silence, stressing in particular three values it holds for Christians today. He said: “Silence lies at the beginning and end of Christ’s earthly existence. The Word, the Word of the Father, became ‘silence’ in the manger and on the cross, on the night of the Nativity and on the night of his Passion.”

He noted that God seems to prefer silence to “shouting, gossiping and noise”. When he appears to the Prophet Elijah, God does not appear in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a “small still voice”.

Participants from Ireland

Let us keep the whole assembly in our prayers, and remember in a special way the Irish participants – Bishop Alan McGuckian, Bishop Brendan Leahy, Sister Patricia Murray IBVM, and recently elected president of the Union of International Superiors General Sister Mary T Barron OLA, who are all voting members, and Rev Professor Eamonn Conway, who is an Expert and Facilitator.

Women set to vote

The Synod includes female voting members for the first time. Pope Francis approved changes to allow lay women including religious sisters, as well as lay men, to take part as full members. This means that 75% of the ongoing assembly is bishops and 25% is non-bishops.

A resource from the Dublin Diocesan Synodal Steering Committee

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Archdiocese of Dublin



Saturday's ecumenical vigil 'won't be the last'

Anglican Archbishop Ian Ernest told Vatican News that while the pre-Synod ecumenical prayer vigil held in St Peter's Square last Saturday evening, September 30, may be the first of its kind, he's confident it won't be the last. The personal representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See said: "This initiative comes out of a journey, a journey where there has been recognition of the other as a brother and sister in Christ, a journey which really seals the fact that our Baptism brings us together."

22-year-old Julia among youngest voting delegates

Julia Oseka, originally from Poland but currently studying physics and theology in Philadelphia in the USA, is one of the youngest voting delegates to the Synod. Julia, pictured, called her participation in the synod "very humbling". She said: "I see it as really a sign that the Church is ready and is open to listen to people – and invite people – to be very active in those big decision-making and discernment processes in the Church."



'Listen to one another'

During a retreat for participants in the Synod on Synodality assembly, delegates were urged to listen to one another and to come together despite "different understandings of the Church". Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP said: "We may be divided by different hopes. But if we listen to the Lord and to each other, seeking to understand his will for the Church and the world, we shall be united in a hope that transcends all our disagreements." He urged the delegates to "journey towards a Church" where people who "do not yet feel at home in the Church" are placed at the centre.



The Synod meeting in the Vatican on Wednesday. For the first time, it met in the Paul VI Hall. Delegates sat at round tables rather than in auditorium style.

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Homily at opening Mass

In his homily at the opening Mass on Wednesday, Pope Francis said that the Synod is "not a political gathering, but a convocation in the Spirit; not a polarised parliament, but a place of grace and communion". He said: "The Holy Spirit often shatters our expectations to create something new that surpasses our predictions and negativity."



Please pray for the Synod! Prayer resources and more at dublindiocese.ie/synod2023