

A Spiritual Conversation

(Press note 3-25 February 2023)

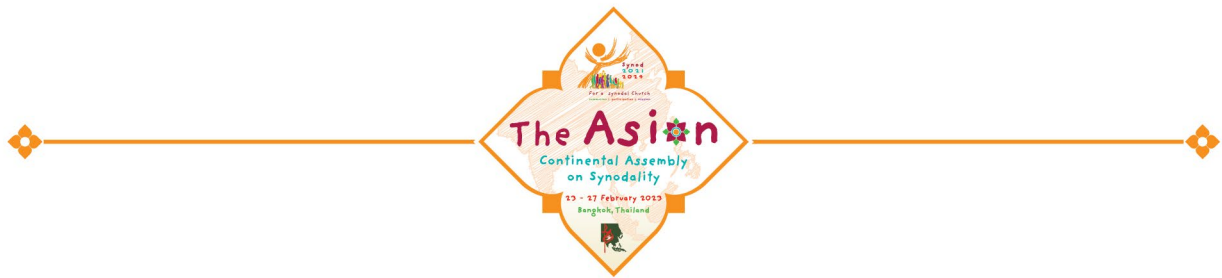
Day 2 of the Asian Continental Assembly on Synodality began with the prayer of the Synod “Adsumus Sancte Spiritus”, invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire all the delegates on this Synodal journey to truly reflect the voice of Asia. The Synod Prayer which has a rich historical background, the first word in Latin, meaning, “We stand before You, Holy Spirit,” has been used at various Councils, Synods and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart XMCJ, Under-Secretary to the General Secretariat of the Synod, gave the orientation for the day where she pointed out that Synodality is a fruit of the Synod on Youth. She elaborated, "if we believe that 'synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit,' as stated by Pope Francis, we can be confident that we will receive the grace to answer this call of God to become a Synodal Church." Sr. Nathalie stressed that Synodality is a gift and discernment is the heart of synodality. She evoked the imagery of the scriptural passage of the Road to Emmaus, which could be considered a Paradigm of a Synodal journey; a Synodal style of Jesus is what we are all called to emulate.

Over the past two days, the delegates were invited to journey through the Synodal process using a 3-step method called, 'Spiritual Conversation'. The first step, “*Taking the floor*” is a time when each participant of the group speaks for two minutes about their experience of the Synodal process; with no discussion or intervention, followed by two minutes of silence to consume the sharing. The second step, “*Making room for others*” is a time when each member of the group speaks for two minutes on what most resonated from what *the other* has said; with no discussion or intervention and followed by two minutes of silence to internalise the sharing. The third step, “*Building together*” is a time of interaction to identify the fruit of the conversation, recognizing convergences, common questions, disagreements, and prophetic voices. This method allows space for moments of grace which helps the group ask the one fundamental question: where is the Holy Spirit leading us?

The groups reflected and prayed on the following questions: *Are there any concerns or issues that have not been sufficiently discussed in the section on “Gaps” in the draft paper? Are there any Asian realities, experiences or concerns that can be included or improved in “Gaps”?*

#SynodBangkok2023



In the second session of the morning, the groups reflected and deliberated on five most urgent priorities for the continent of Asia, and which urgently need to be brought to the Synodal Assembly in October.

The moderators and facilitators for the day were Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, Archbishop of Delhi, India, Ms Christina Kheng, Commission on Methodology for the Synod and Ms Momoko Nishimura, Member of the FABC Synodal Task Force. The facilitators reminded the delegates to assume their responsibility to speak as the voice of Asia and not their personal capacity.

Both morning sessions ended with time before the Blessed Sacrament; for prayer is the driving force of this synodal journey.

The third session of the day invited the groups to extensively examine the Draft Framework of the Working Document. The day concluded with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, themed as a Mass for Asia, presided by Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Archbishop Emeritus of Karachi, Pakistan, Member of the Council for the Synod.

The Journey is ongoing and like the disciple on the road to Emmaus, the delegates to echo the words of scripture *“Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”- Lk 24:32*

#SynodBangkok2023