

## Synergy in a Symphony

*Everyone has a Voice*

*Press note Day3*

The third and final day of the Asian Continental Assembly on Synodality, just as the previous two days, began with 'Adsumus Sancte Spiritus' a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

The facilitators for the day were Bishop Pablo David, Bishop of Kalookan, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines; Ms Teresa Wu, from Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference; and Ms Eestela Padilla, Executive Secretary of the FABC Office of Theological Concerns, Theological Commission, for the Synod and member of the FABC Synodal Task Force.

Within their groups, the delegates shared their thoughts and views of events of Day 2 that resounded in their hearts and minds.

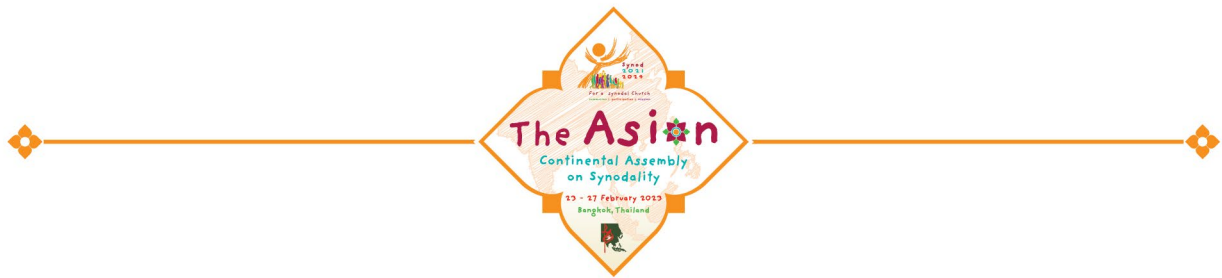
Jean-Claude Cardinal Hollerich SJ, Archbishop of Luxembourg, and Relator General of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops addressed the delegates, underlining three points. Using the example of musical instruments, Cardinal Hollerich first explained how each delegate is an instrument, and ought to function in unison, to produce a **symphony**. And this has to be done repeatedly, with discipline, and in tune with others (instruments), lest it turns into a cacophony. Secondly, Cardinal Hollerich stressed that Synodality requires humility, and it is only in humility can we work and walk together on this journey. Lastly, Cardinal Hollerich emphasized that a Synodal Church is a Church that is missioned by Christ to proclaim the Gospel and be of selfless service to all people of God.

Fr. Clarence Devadass, a member of the Discernment and Drafting Team, then presented a few highlights of the amended Draft Framework of the Final Document, as well as the processes involved in incorporating amendments suggested by the delegates. The delegates were invited to reflect in silence, in preparation for the spiritual conversation within the groups.

In the afternoon session, the delegates reflected on two questions - which ecclesial structures need to be changed or created to enhance the synodality of the Church in Asia? and what the delegates wish to see transpire between the October 2023 session and the October 2024 session of the Synod on Synodality. The delegates then shared their final thoughts on the final framework of the Final Document followed by a short while of silent prayer.

In the concluding statements, Mario Cardinal Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, shared his views on the three-day Asian Continental Synod, assuring the delegates that their journey at this Synod will be fruitful and their contributions will not be forgotten by the Universal Church. Archbishop Kikuchi, Secretary General of the FABC, gave the final vote of thanks, placing on record the gratitude towards all those involved in ensuring that the Asian Synod was successful.

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The concluding Eucharist was celebrated by Charles Maung Cardinal Bo, Archbishop of Yangon and President of the FABC; concelebrated by Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovitvanit Archbishop of Bangkok George Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly (Syro-Malabar), and Bishop Mathias Ri Iong-hoon (Lee Yong-Hoon) of Suwon, South Korea.

In his homily, Cardinal Bo expressed that the synodal journey is relatively like Jesus' journey in the wilderness - challenging but necessary because it enables the Church to better witness to the Gospel, through a process of listening, encountering, and discerning. Cardinal Bo stated that a change of attitude is required in our approach towards the challenges we face. He offered the word **L.E.N.T** as an acronym for this attitudinal change:

**L = Letting Go.** If this journeying together is to be meaningful, we need to learn how to let go of all that prevents us from being that synodal church as shedding is a pre-requisite for growth.

**E = Encounter.** Journeying on the path of discipleship has a specific goal – to encounter Christ and be reminded of Pope Francis' call to a 'culture of encounter'. An invitation to work in a simple way 'as Jesus did', not just seeing, but looking; not just hearing, but listening; not just passing people by, but stopping with them; not just saying "what a shame, poor people!" but allowing one's self to be moved with compassion.

**N = Neighbourliness.** The parable of the Good Samaritan was preceded by the question: 'Who is my neighbour?' (cf. Lk 10:29). In the end, it was the one who showed mercy. In Asia, we are a minority and we live amidst social, political, and religious tensions. Despite such tensions, we called to help our brothers and sisters in need.

**T = Transformation.** Cardinal Bo recalled the words of the psalmist: "Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth." In this synodal journey, he said that we are called to hear what the Holy Spirit is telling to us. Therefore, if we are walking together to bring about a renewal in the life of the Church, we need the transforming power of the Holy Spirit as by ourselves we cannot achieve anything. We are always in need of God's transforming grace as we walk together in this synodal journey 'to serve Him alone'.

At the end of the Eucharist, the twelve representatives of the groups during the Synod, placed before the celebrant, candles they bore at the inaugural Eucharist, in floral holders, as a symbolic offering of their interactions and recordings during these three days.

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