



EMBARGO UNTIL SPEECH DELIVERED

General Congregation 8 - 13 October 2023

The Bishop's Ministry from Missionary synodal perspective

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To renew and promote the Bishop's ministry from a missionary synodal perspective in the local church, it is important for the Bishop to foster a missionary communion within the diocesan Church. The Bishop should follow the example of the first Christian communities, where believers were of one heart and one soul. This means that the Bishop should be actively involved in the life of the faithful, sometimes going before them, pointing the way and keeping their hope vibrant, and at other times simply being in their midst with an unassuming and merciful presence. The Bishop should also be willing to walk after them, helping those who lag behind and allowing the flock to strike out on new paths.¹

In order to promote a dynamic, open, and missionary communion, the Bishop should encourage and develop means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law and other forms of pastoral dialogue. The aim of these participatory processes should not be ecclesiastical organization, but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone [¹]. The Bishop should also be conscious of the missionary character of his pastoral ministry and ensure that all his pastoral activity is marked by a missionary spirit capable of awakening and maintaining among the faithful a zeal for the spread of the Gospel [²]. This includes bringing about, promoting, and directing missionary activities and initiatives in the diocese, as well as encouraging the missionary dimension in the particular Church by promoting fundamental values such as the acknowledgement of one's neighbor, respect for cultural diversity, and healthy interaction between different cultures 2.

Furthermore, the Bishop should be seen as the servant and witness of hope, as mission is the sure index of our faith in Christ and his love for us. By proclaiming the Risen Lord, Christians present the One who inaugurates a new era of history and announce to the world the good news of a complete and universal salvation. The Bishop should inspire men and women of all times to a new life motivated by hope³.

In order to promote a missionary synodal perspective, the Bishop should foster a mentality shaped by synodal thinking, which joyfully welcomes and promotes the grace in virtue of which all the baptized are qualified and called to be missionary disciples. The Bishop should encourage the mutual collaboration of all in evangelizing witness based on everyone's gifts and

roles, without clericalizing lay people and without turning the clergy into lay people. This includes avoiding the temptation of excessive clericalism, which keeps lay people away from decision-making⁴. Additionally, the Bishop should actively keep in touch with movements in the Church that have the purpose of evangelization. The Bishop should encourage these movements to work in conformity with the charism recognized by the Church, while also being vigilant against them being closed to the situation that surrounds them.

In summary, to renew and promote the Bishop's ministry from a missionary synodal perspective in the local church, the Bishop should foster a missionary communion within the diocesan Church, encourage and develop means of participation and pastoral dialogue, be conscious of the missionary character of his pastoral ministry, promote a mentality shaped by synodal thinking, and actively engage with movements in the Church with the purpose of evangelization⁵.

1 *Evangelii Gaudium*

2 *Pastores gregis* 65.

3 To the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of France on their "ad Limina" visit (February 7, 2004)

4 *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church* 104.

5 To the third group of Bishops of the Polish Episcopal Conference on occasion of their ad Limina visit (December 17, 2005.).