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CONFERENZA STAMPA di presentazione dell' *Instrumentum laboris* per la prima sessione della XVI Assemblea Generale Ordinaria del Sinodo dei Vescovi, 20 giugno 2023

Intervento del **cardinale Jean-Claude Hollerich, S.I.**, Arcivescovo di Luxembourg;
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It is a great honor and joy for me to present you the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod of Bishops. Let me first give you an information what the document is not meant to be: it is no document which after several amendments by the Synod participants should lead to a final version to be voted on at the end of the Synod. It is not a tentative answer to all questions about Synodality. It is rather the result of the synodal process on all levels, a result which leads to many questions which could receive answers by the participants of the Synod of Bishops. The text structure and the structural dynamics of the Synod Assembly are intimately connected.

The text first gives a narration of the synodal process the Church has undertaken. The text is based on a myriad of personal and communitarian experiences. The Church is in Synod: by trying to walk together we experienced a new art of walking led by the Spirit. In this Church experience the method of conversation in the Spirit was fundamental: the same conversation in the Spirit will be our main tool for discernment!

The text leads us to a matter of discernment, a discernment about concretization of communion, mission and participation.

How can we grow in communion, welcoming everybody without exclusion while remaining faithful to the Gospel?

Which acknowledging each baptized person's contribution to our common mission?

How can we identify governance structures and dynamics for participation in a missionary Synodal Church?

Mission is an important aspect present as much in communion and participation.

Each of these three priorities is linked to five working sheets: these five different approaches take into consideration the diversity of persons as well as the diversity of the different social, cultural and religious contexts we have experienced during the synodal process.

This text is extremely short: in the English version 24 pages for the two parts:

For a Synodal Church. An integral experience and Communion, participation, mission. Three priority issues for the synodal Church.

Pages 25 to 60 reflect the Working Sheets. An introduction and a guide for use introduce us to the Working Sheets.

Each working sheet gives us a short reflection, fruit of the discernment during the synodal process and is followed by a fundamental question for the discernment in the different working sessions of the Synod of Bishops. Each participant also finds different points for prayer and preparatory reflection. These questions have to be put in the general framework of how answering the call of the Spirit and how growing as a synodal Church. The Holy Spirit is the real protagonist of the Synod.

Let me give you some titles of the working sheets and the questions for discernment:

A communion that radiates.

How does the service of charity and commitment to justice and care for our common home nourish communion in a synodal Church?

Walking together means not leading anyone behind and remaining alongside those who struggle the most.

How are we building a synodal Church capable of promoting the belonging and participation of the least within the Church and in society?

How can a synodal Church make credible the promise that “love and truth will meet” (Ps 85.11)?

How can the Church of our time better fulfill its mission through greater recognition and promotion of the baptismal dignity of women?

How can we properly value ordained Ministry in the relationship with baptismal Ministries in a missionary perspective?

How do we understand the vocation and mission of the Bishop in a synodal missionary perspective? What renewal of the vision and exercise of episcopal ministry is needed for a synodal Church characterized by co-responsibility?

You see by these examples that the text of the *Instrumentum Laboris* has no pretense to be a theological treaty about synodality. The text does not give answers but merely put questions.

The bishops as those called to be those who perfect the discernment started in the worldwide synodal process have to fulfill their episcopal mission and try to give some answers.

Allow me a trivial comparison: the text is like a cooking book. The chef cooks receive that book together with some ingredients: their mission is to put the different ingredients together in order to please the different palates? An impossible task, you might think... if in the background the Holy Spirit is not guiding to find a new food harmony.

Harmony-Consensus-lead by the Spirit: those are words which describe the way this text has to be used.