

SYNODAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH IN TURKEY

OCTOBER 7-9, 2022

On 7-9 October 2022 the Synodal Conference of the Church in Turkey took place at the Archdiocese of Izmir, which saw the meeting of the representatives of all the people of God who live in this land under the guidance of the Spirit in the certainty that he still has much to say to our Churches as it was two thousand years ago. This significant ecclesial meeting took place in a context of listening, discussion and prayer and conceived in continuity with the synodal path in recent months that has taken place at the diocesan and national level as desired by Pope Francis.

The first day of work coincided with the traditional memory of the Council of Ephesus, which in 431 the divine motherhood of Mary was dogmatically defined. The celebration of the Eucharist was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio in Turkey Msgr. Marek Solczyński. It celebrated in the ruins of the ancient basilica built on the site where the Council of Ephesus was gathered. Also, some groups of pilgrims who joined to the Synod Conference and the faithful who came from the Christian communities of Izmir attended to the Celebration of Eucharist. The Archbishop of Salerno, Msgr. Andrea Bellandi and the Archbishop Emeritus of Kaunas in Lithuania, Msgr. Lionginas Virbalas also attended the Mass. A reason for profound joy for all was the presence of his Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople who, in his own words, enthusiastically welcomed the invitation to take part in the solemn celebration. In the course of his homily, the Patriarch recalled the fundamental aspects of the dogma of divine motherhood and emphasized that "the synodality that exists in the Church can truly be compared to the harmony and concord that reigns among the Persons of the Trinity".

During the work of the Synod, the bishops, the heads of the various institutions and commissions operating within the Church of Turkey, and the representatives of the ecclesial movements present in this country participated. The combination of these reports made it possible to have a panoramic view of the situation of the whole Church of Turkey and its various components. The importance of becoming a Christian community more and more capable of interacting with the local culture, without prejudices and closures, more willing to welcome all those who draw close to it, and capable of an effective proclamation of the Gospel because it is alive, was emphasized in particular. And adapted to the concrete situations of the present time. Without letting herself be disheartened by being a small flock and by the numerous difficulties with which everyone called to face every day, the image of a Church eager to renew itself, to be faithful to the mission received from the Lord, not to be sad, but blissful.

It was precisely to eight Beatitudes that the task of summarizing the great patrimony of ideas and intentions that emerged during the work of the Synodal Congress was entrusted and of tracing the path for the future of our Church in Turkey: blessed is the Church who listens, like John, because she will to beat the heart of God in the world; blessed is the Church who sees, like Paul, because she will generate children of light and children of the day; blessed is the Church who welcomes and cares, like Timothy, because she will win the good battle of the faith; blessed is the Church who gives witness, like Ignatius, because she will see the glorious wounds of the risen Christ shine on his body; blessed is the Church who creates bridges, like Irenaeus, because she will bind men to God; blessed is the Church who offers herself to announce endless happiness, like Polycarp, because no one will be able to take her joy from her; blessed is the Church who is silent and contemplates in action, like Mary, because she will always have her gaze and heart open to Paradise.

Blessed are you, who built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, where the cornerstone which is Jesus Christ, because together you will become God's dwelling through the Spirit. Rejoice and exult because your reward is great in heaven: a triumphant Church that shines and throbs with love in God's endless life.

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