

13<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**WUCWO DAY**



LIVING  
SYNODALITY



World Union of  
Catholic Women's  
Organisations

# WUCWO DAY

13<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Living synodality**

Prepared by the Europe region

## ENTRY MOTIVATION

**Narrator** On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021, His Holiness Pope Francis opened the process for a global synod. Pope Francis invites the whole Church to reflect on a decisive theme for its life and mission through the convocation of a synod, which begins from that moment and is entitled: "For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission".

The Greek word *synodos* is a fusion of two words: *syn*, meaning "together", and *hodos*, meaning "way", which basically translates as "together on the way". Synodality is a style or way of being Church. Francis has called us to reflect and discover ourselves as women on the way of evangelisation. Synodality represents the main way for the Church, called to renew itself under the action of the Spirit and through listening to the Word.

Becoming aware of how we live communion, participation, mission, leads us to face together this question that requires us to be ready to listen to the Holy Spirit, who, like the wind, "*blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes*" (Jn 3:8). So let us pray on this WUCWO day with this theme to help us to hear God and humanity so that we can live walking together, as we are asked to do, and to find each one where the evangelising Holy Spirit is inviting me. Recall how the Spirit has led you to this moment in your life of faith. The Holy Spirit has gathered us here in the name of Jesus. Let us pause momentarily to acknowledge that God is truly with us.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Reader: "Enlarge the space for your tent" (Is 54:2)**

*The word of the prophet reminds the exiled people, the experience of the exodus and the crossing of the desert, when they lived in tents, and announces the promise of the return to the land, a sign of joy and hope. Pilar says "I am aware of having made a long journey, always going forward and I can identify Jesus Christ in my own "Exodus" to the land of freedom, dignity and justice". To prepare for evangelisation, it is necessary to enlarge the tent, acting on the three elements of its structure. The first is the awnings, which provide protection from the sun, wind and rain, creating a space for living and sharing. They must be deployed so that they can also protect those who are still outside this space, but who feel called to enter it. The second structural element of the tent are the ropes that hold the awnings together. They must balance the tension needed to prevent the tent from collapsing, with the flexibility to cushion the movements caused by the wind.... Finally, the third element are the pegs, which anchor the structure to the ground and ensure its solidity, but are still able to move when the tent needs to be set up elsewhere.*

**Narrator** It is the role of women to sustain the Christian community as credible subjects and reliable partners in the paths of social dialogue, healing, reconciliation, inclusion and participation, reconstruction of democracy, promotion of fraternity and social friendship, regenerating relationships based on love. On this WUCWO day it is time to stop and ask ourselves how we, women from all over the world, are living this vocation and this call of the Pope. (Moment of reflection/prayer)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reader:** *Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for their diversity... an experience of emptying oneself in order to be filled by Christ through the Holy Spirit, and thus a process by which we receive richer relationships, deeper ties to God and each other. (CSD 28 Continental Stage Document)*

**Narrator** The synodal journey is taking place within a historical context characterised by epochal changes in society and by a crucial stage in the life of the Church, which cannot be ignored: it is in the folds of this complex context, in its tensions and contradictions, that we are called to "scrutinise the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel" (GS, n. 4). If Pope Francis has called us to this great consultation, it means a personal emptying that wants to give great importance to discovering the different sensitivities that prevail today in our Church and in our society. Walking together, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is essential to grasp these sensitivities. It is only by getting to know our ways of thinking and acting that we can place ourselves at the will of the Spirit for an authentic conversion that becomes a light that illuminates our actions and the lives of others. It should not only be the Pope's desire to reach out to others in order to live communion, participation and mission, but also the desire of all of us. To approach others as a gift from God and as sisters in order to enrich ourselves with their life proposals should be our special concern. (Moment of reflection/prayer)

**1<sup>st</sup> Reader** *The vision of a Church capable of radical inclusion, shared belonging, and deep hospitality according to the teachings of Jesus is at the heart of the synodal process: "Instead of behaving like gatekeepers trying to exclude others from the table, we need to do more to make sure that people know that everyone can find a place and a home here"... especially outside the more familiar territories, "leaving the comfortable position of those who give hospitality to allow ourselves to be welcomed into the existence of those who are our companions on the journey of humanity" (CSD 31)*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reader** We are continually challenged "as the People of God to take upon ourselves the pain of our brothers and sisters who are wounded in flesh and spirit". *People ask that the Church be a refuge for the wounded and broken, not an institution for the perfect. They want the Church to meet people wherever they are, to walk with them rather than judge them, and to build real relationships through caring and authenticity, not a purpose of superiority (CSD 39).* And what better way to do this than with the feminine face of the Church?

**Narrator** Jesus, who came to heal the sick and not the healthy, tells us in the Gospel that he met with sinners and tax collectors; that is why many of the responses in the Continental Stage Document are along these lines. We, women of WUCWO, who want to follow the footsteps of Jesus, our teacher, can only strive to improve more and more. It is true that we are already doing so, or at least we are trying to do so, as shown by the resolutions we adopted at the General Assembly and that we then put into practice in our local and regional organisations.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reader** *The Church's mission is to make Christ present in the midst of His People through reading the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments and through all actions that care for the wounded and suffering. "It is necessary for all of us in the Church to enter into a process of conversion in order to respond to this need... Hence the importance of returning to the essence of Christian life and of our first love, and returning to our roots as the first communities; that is to say, where all things were held in common" (CSD 41).*

## PETITIONS

1. For the synodal process, that all of us may participate with sincerity in our responses and desires for conversion to a more authentic life. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

2. For Pope Francis, that this process may be a reference point for what the universal Church feels, thinks and does, and that together we may be able to give the appropriate response. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

3. For those responsible for carrying out this process, that the Lord may enlighten them and that they may be attentive and faithful in presenting the views of the participants in this process. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

4. Let us pray for a true dialogue in the Church and in society. That, through a path of perseverance, patience and mutual understanding, we may be attentive to the experience of individuals and peoples. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

5. Let us pray for the smooth running of Pilar Bellosillo's beatification process. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

6. For those who feel lonely and abandoned, that they may always find in us merciful people who accompany them in their difficulties. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

7. For those of us who have gathered for this celebration, that the Lord may give us a heart of justice and mercy to treat all people with love. LET US PRAY

**All: Remember, O Lord, your children.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reader** The whole Church is called to confront the weight of a culture steeped in clericalism and machismo, inherited from its history, and forms of exercising authority in which various types of abuse are embedded. *"In a Church in which almost all decision-makers are men, there are few spaces in which women can make their voices heard. Yet they are the backbone of ecclesial communities, both because they represent the majority of practising members and because they are among the most active members of the Church". Pilar Bellosillo defined it as follows: "We, women, are the protagonists of that historical moment, characterised by the awakening of female consciousness in the world (1950-1970). It is the moment of our "liberation". And for this, WUCWO provides us with remarkable, providential possibilities!"*

**Narrator** The Church has often been accused of having high standards, of lacking mercy, and many have turned away from it because they did not feel welcomed and understood in their life situations for these reasons. Through the communion of saints, we all share in the virtue and sin of the Church. The determined participation in the different stages of the synod gives us an opportunity to improve our life of following Jesus. We intend to intensify the certainty of feeling loved by the Father and therefore, with joy, to be bearers of this feeling to all humanity so that all may enjoy this grace.

**4<sup>th</sup> Reader** It is usual for people in our organisations to work together to carry out

the projects we have planned, but without being aware that this means working in synodality. We needed the Holy Father to call us to a synod to realise the importance of all of us coming together. We are interconnected people because we all need each other. We cannot underestimate anyone, because at any moment we will need the collaboration of those we can least think of. Let's become aware that "walking together" enriches us all.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reader** " *To walk in a synodal way, by listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue, has possibly an 'already and not yet' dimension, it is there, but much more to be done. The laity are capable, talented and willing to contribute more and more, provided they are given opportunities. Further surveys and studies at the parish level can open up more avenues where the contributions of the laity can be immense and the result would be more vibrant and flourishing Church, which is the goal of synodality*" (CSD 100).

**Narrator** Mary, Queen of Peace, help us in our commitment to partake in communion, participation and mission and let us make present in the world that the love with which the Church loves all people is accomplished by walking together as men and women in co-responsibility.

**PRAYER<sup>1</sup>**  
**for Pilar Bellosillo**  
**in the process of beatification**

Lord God and our Father, we thank you for the fruitful life of Pilar Bellosillo, for her witness of dedication to the cause of the Gospel, for her love for the Church, for her intense and responsible work on the path of renewal in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. We thank you for the impulse she gave to the ecclesial laity and for her constant involvement in the promotion of women. Trusting in her intercession, we place in your hands the grace that we ask you to grant us, and to make us also courageous and committed witnesses to the faith. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PRAYER TO MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE, PATRONESS OF WUCWO**  
(All)

O Loving God, your Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world to do your Will and leave us His Peace. Through the intercession and example of our Blessed Mother Mary, Queen of Peace, grant us the wisdom and humility to reflect that peace to the world. Inspire our thoughts, words and deeds to bear witness to your presence in our hearts. May your Holy Spirit fill us with every grace and blessing so that we may pursue what leads to peace for all humanity. Amen

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1) In accordance with the Decrees of Urban VIII, nothing is intended to prevent the judgement of the Church. With the proper licences.