



Dear Brother Cardinals,

as you prepare to gather and, in listening to the Spirit, choose a new Bishop of Rome to lead the entire Catholic Church, we want to assure you that we accompany you with affection and prayer, so that you may feel the presence, expectations, hopes and support of the many Catholic men and women who seek to follow Jesus along the paths of the world.

In particular, as a network of around thirty organizations representing various Italian associations, communities, groups and magazines, over these past years we have experienced how much the synodal paths have come to characterise the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, and the Italian one in particular. This journey gave us a glimpse of a more joyful, loving and inclusive Church, a Church more faithful to the Gospel, and helped us develop a more responsible awareness as believers, it made us more attentive to the Christian community and more willing to serve God's plan for humanity and creation, starting from the last and the least.

Just a few weeks ago, during the 2nd Italian Synodal Assembly, we were able to experience the fruitful combination of the freedom of speech of the delegates, who assumed their responsibility as adult Christians with determination and passion, and the bishops' capacity for listening. Our bishops were able to interpret their authority as a service to the *sensus fidei fidelium*, strengthening ecclesial communion, confirming an authentic synodal journey made of mutual listening, where there was no opposition between lay people and bishops.

With a synodal spirit, we therefore ask you to choose the new Bishop of Rome according to this discernment: that he may continue decisively along the path opened by Pope Francis towards an increasingly synodal Church, developing the line traced out both by the Synod of Bishops of 2021-2024 and, in the local sphere, by the Synodal Way of the Churches in Italy.

In fact, we are convinced, as Pope Francis repeated, that 'the path of synodality is the path that God expects from the Church of the third millennium', as it is the form most suited to a truly global Church, "united in diversity". A Church capable of combining the universality of Catholicism and its rootedness in the different cultures of an increasingly globalized world, one that rejects the presumed 'superiority' of one civilisation over the others and therefore any homologation. A Church constantly united in the search for God's will in the midst of a diversity of spiritualities, theologies, pastoral urgencies, and responses to local circumstances.

Only through synodality can we manage and overcome the inevitable misunderstandings, confusions and conflicts, and thus keep alive the reality of the Church's "prophetic ministry" in believing, moving towards an effective fraternity and sorority, of which the *consensus Ecclesiae* is the hearth, not imposed in an authoritarian manner, but emerging from the welcoming of what the Holy Spirit gives to all the faithful.

And this synodality, when put into practice and truly lived, becomes the most vivid and credible testimony of the possibility of peaceful coexistence among differences, a testimony that our Church, in ecumenical harmony with all others, can offer today to a world torn apart by wars and polarisations.

With these sentiments we accompany you in this crucial moment of your ecclesial service.

The Italian Synodal Network

5 May 2025

Here are the contributions of the Italian Synodal Network to the universal and Italian Synodal journey:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OCxdURuNHB195WZb1KiqnqhJSL-8DC4M?usp=sharing>.