

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*This Eastern Rite bishop corrects the current errors of the Synod on Synodality from the Eastern church's long history of synods.*

*Lay people are not participants, only bishops.*

*It is a walk with Christ.*

*Synods are usually called to address a particular issue.*

*Synods cannot be discussion groups to propose anything by anyone.*

*The Synod on Synodality does not appear to have such a goal.*

*The Synod on Synodality is a break with the concept of Synods.*

*The Synod on Synodality reflects modern world thought.*

*Church life is NOT a democracy or majority rule.*

*This synod marginalizes or forgets episcopal rule.*

*Synods are **not a 'march of all together' but rather a 'march of all together with Christ,***

*Synods do not refer to the journey but to Jesus.*

*Synods do not refer to the road but to Jesus who brings us together.*

***A synod, Bishop Manuel reiterated, is "the journey with Christ," who is "the only companion of all of us as members of His Body which is the Church.***

***"Never forget," he added, "the identity of the celebrant [Christ]."***

*The Synod on Synodality appears to be not about Jesus, but about a new definition and development of a merely human process in order to be used to impose novelties that its leaders demand the new church to become rather than a walk with Jesus in His Church.*

## **Greek Catholic Bishop: Synod on Synodality Is Not Like Eastern Synods**

*Greek Byzantine Catholic Bishop Manuel Nin stresses that Synod means, above all, journeying with Christ and warns against "Christian parliamentarianism."*



*Bishop Manuel Nin is seen before an open-air service at the 102th German Catholics Day on the Castle Square in Stuttgart, southern Germany, on May 26, 2022. (photo: Thomas Kienzle / AFP via Getty Images)*

Edward Pentin

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VATICAN CITY — Despite [claims](#) to the contrary, **the upcoming Synod on Synodality is unlike any synod of the Eastern Churches — it resembles a parliamentary process, and lacks a clear and coherent goal**, a Greek Catholic bishop who will participate in the meeting has said.

In an Aug. 3 [commentary](#) published on the Greek Catholic Exarchate website, Bishop Manuel Nin, the Greek Byzantine Catholic Church's apostolic exarch to Greece, expressed several concerns about the synod general assembly, the first session of which will take place Oct. 4-29 and the second in October 2024.

**The upcoming meeting marks a significant break with previous synod assemblies in that a selected group of lay participants will now be allowed to vote.**

**Bishop Manuel recognized that this exercise of authority has a “synodal dimension” in that decisions taken at a “fully collective level belong to the synod’s bishops,” but he stressed that if the West understands synodality as where “everyone, lay and clerical, act together in order to arrive at some ecclesiastical, doctrinal, canonical, disciplinary decision, whatever it may be, it becomes clear that such synodality does not exist in the East.”**

**Synodality in all Christian Churches, both East and West, cannot be a kind of reflection of the modern world whereby the Church becomes like a “modern Western democracy, possibly parliamentary, where everyone can say everything,” he warned. The life of the Church, he said, “has never been a form of democracy in which everyone decides everything by majority rules.”**

**Such “Christian parliamentarianism,” he continued, can result in the construction of a “pyramidal ecclesiology” that, because it has invited so many laity and non-clerics to take part with voting rights, marginalizes or forgets episcopal collegiality in matters of administration and the life of the Church.**

**He further noted the “absence of clear clarification” about the meaning of synodality, and observed that the entire process, which began at the national and continental level in 2021-22, is a place “where anyone can express themselves on anything, even propose issues and opinions which are usually left to the exclusive right of the Bishop of Rome.”**

**He said that as an Eastern Catholic bishop, what especially mystified him were claims made by “many” persons, “even of**

known authority,” who have said: “You in the East have always had synodality” unlike the Church in the West.

“But what synodality are we talking about?” Bishop Manuel asked, and **warned of confusing synodality with the episcopal collegiality of synods in the Eastern Churches.**

The latter, he said, **“is associated with the exercise of authority, pastoral ministry, service within the Christian Churches, which takes place in the assembly of the bishops belonging to a particular Church and headed by a patriarch, archbishop or metropolitan.”**

**“Decisions within these Churches are made by the assembly of bishops** (almost always called a “synod” or sometimes a “council of hierarchs”) belonging to an Eastern Church,” he said. And he explained that such meetings are convened by the presiding bishops in view of important decisions relating to the “Christian journey undertaken by pastors for the good of their faithful, spiritually and materially.”

**By contrast, he noted that the Synod on Synodality is a “collective ascent” of laity and clergy but he wondered: “To get where? To what end?” He also posed the question: with whom are the participants walking?**

The word *synod*, he pointed out, comes “directly from the Greek and means ‘walking with,’” but he added that what must be “clarified immediately so that our reflection on synodality does not go astray” is the meaning and real object of the Greek preposition *syn* (“with”). **“It does not refer to the ‘journey’ but to ‘someone’ with whom it is carried out and completed,”** he wrote. **“It is the object or person ‘with whom’ the preposition ‘syn’ connects us and brings us together.”**

Bishop Manuel stressed **it refers neither to the road, nor to laity or clergy, but the preposition *syn* “connects us Christians and brings us to a Person who is Christ.”**

**Journey Together With Christ**

“Therefore, a first clarification should be made: **it is not a ‘march of all together’ but rather a ‘march of all together with Christ,’**” he said. “Let us not forget that this ‘with Christ’ is completed in the Church, which is nourished and animated by the Holy Gifts of His precious Body and Blood.”

Synodality in the East and the West is a lived experience, he continued, and the “synodal” journey has always been a part of the Christian life because **the life of each of the baptized is a “journey together with Christ the Lord who is the way, the truth and the life.”** This walking of the baptized with Christ is “important to emphasize,” he said, and it is something that should be “restored to the forefront of our Christian life.”

He recalled the story attributed to St. Anthony the Great, a desert father of the early Church, who thought the footprints in the sand were his, only to discover that they did not belong to him but to “Him who walks beside Anthony and who sustains him in moments of weakness.”

Bishop Manuel also recalled monastic life, both in the East and in the West, as a “model of that synodality” that allows one to be “guided by the Gospel,” along with spiritual earthly guides, to “walk with Christ in search of God.” He told a story of the late Cardinal Giacomo Biffi of Bologna who warned during the Great Jubilee of 2000 of the danger of “obscuring or even forgetting the One who was the sole reason for the Jubilee.”

Closing with the question, “What then is synodality?” Bishop Manuel said that for him, **it is the “journey of all of us who have been baptized in Christ, who hear His Gospel, celebrate our faith, receive His grace in the sacraments, even through our brothers and sisters — a journey definitely together, guided and accompanied, at times, by the hand, or even carried on the shoulders of our pastors, following in the footsteps of the One who is the way, the truth and the life.”**

**A synod, Bishop Manuel reiterated, is “the journey with Christ,” who is “the only companion of all of us as members of His Body which is the Church.**

**“Never forget,” he added, “the identity of the celebrant [Christ].”**



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