

IS-SINODU TAL-ISQFIJIET

PROFIL

Is-Sinodu tal-Isqfijiet twaqqaf mill-Papa San Pawlu VI fil-15 ta' Settembru 1965 bil-Motu Proprju *Apostolica sollicitudo*. It-twaqqif tiegħu seħħ fil-kuntest tal-Konċilju Vatikan II li, bil-Kostituzzjoni Dommatika *Lumen gentium* (21 ta' Novembru 1964) kien ikkonċentra b'mod qawwi fuq it-tagħlim dwar l-episkopat u heġġeg għal sehem ikbar min-naħa tal-Isqfijiet *cum et sub Petro* f'materji li jolqtu lill-Knisja universali.

Id-Digriet tal-Konċilju *Christus Dominus* (28 ta' Ottubru 1965) hekk ifisser lil dan il-korp ġdid li kien għadu kemm twaqqaf: "Kollaborazzjoni aktar effikaci mal-oghla ragħaj tal-Knisja jistgħu jagħtuha, bil-modi diġà stabbiliti jew li għad ikunu stabbiliti mill-Papa, l-Isqfijiet magħzula min-naħiet differenti tad-dinja mlaqqgħin f'kunsill imsejjaħ bl-isem ta' 'Sinodu tal-Isqfijiet', sinodu li, fil-waqt li jirrappreżenta l-Episkopat kollu, juri li l-Isqfijiet kollha f'għaqda ġerarkika jerfġu flimkien it-toqol tar-responsabbiltà għall-Knisja universali" (n. 5).

Matul is-snin in-normi sinodali għaddew minn tiġdid għal ieħor, kif jixhdu d-diversi edizzjonijiet tal-*Ordo Synodi Episcoporum* ippubblikati fl-1966, l-1969, l-1971 u l-2006. Sadattant, il-Kodiċi tal-Liġi Kanonika (25 ta' Jannar 1983), kanoni 342-348, u l-Kodiċi tal-Kanoni tal-Knejjes Orjentali (18 ta' Ottubru 1990), kanoni 46, integraw is-Sinodu fil-liġi universali ta-Knisja, u speċifikaw in-natura u l-funzjoni tiegħu.

Dan l-aħħar, il-Papa Frangisku, bil-Kostituzzjoni Appostolika *Episcopalis communio* (15 ta' Settembru 2018), ġedded b'mod qawwi s-Sinodu tal-Isqfijiet, u dahhlu fil-qafas ta' *sinodalità* bħala dimensjoni kostituttiva tal-Knisja, fuq kull livell tal-ħajja tagħha.

B'mod partikulari, is-Sinodu hu mifhum bħala proċess magħmul minn tliet partijiet: **il-fazi ta' preparazzjoni**, fejn isseħħ il-konsultazzjoni mal-Poplu ta' Alla fuq temi indikati mill-Papa; **il-fazi ta' celebrazzjoni**, ikkaratterizzata mil-laqgħa tal-assemblea tal-Isqfijiet; u **il-fazi ta' implimentazzjoni**, fejn il-konkluzjonijiet tas-Sinodu, wara li jkunu ġew approvati mill-Papa, jiġu milqugħa mill-Knejjes lokali.

Għalhekk, il-fazi ċentrali, fejn titwettaq il-hidma ta' dixxerniment tar-Ragħajja, għandha qabilha u warajha fazijiet li jitolbu s-sehem tal-Poplu kollu ta' Alla, fil-kotra ta' komponenti tiegħu.

Is-Sinodu – li għandu Segretarjat Ġenerali magħmul minn Segretarju Ġenerali, Sottosegretarju u għadd ta' Kunsilli speċjali tal-Isqfijiet – jiltaqa' f'għamliet diversi ta' Assemblej: f'Assemblea Ġenerali Ordinarja, għal kwistjonijiet dwar il-ġid tal-Knisja universali; f'Assemblea Ġenerali Straordinarja, għal kwistjonijiet ta' kunsiderazzjoni urgenti; f'Assemblea Speċjali, għal kwistjonijiet li jolqtu reġjun speċifiku wiehed jew iktar. Barra minn hekk, hi wkoll ir-responsabbiltà tal-Papa li jsejjaħ Assemblea Sinodali fi qbil ma' modalitajiet oħra stabbiliti minnu.

THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

PROFILE

The Synod of Bishops was established by St Paul VI on 15th September 1965 with the Motu Proprio *Apostolica Sollicitudo*. Its formation took place in the context of the Second Vatican Council which, with the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (21st November 1964), had largely concentrated on the doctrine of the episcopate, urging greater involvement of the Bishops *cum et sub Petro* in matters that concern the universal Church.

The Council Decree *Christus Dominus* (28th October 1965) describes the newly established body as follows: “Bishops chosen from various parts of the world, in ways and manners established or to be established by the Roman pontiff, render more effective assistance to the supreme pastor of the Church in a deliberative body which will be called by the proper name of Synod of Bishops. Since it shall be acting in the name of the entire Catholic episcopate, it will at the same time show that all the bishops in hierarchical communion partake of the solicitude for the universal Church” (n. 5).

Over the years the synodal norms have undergone successive improvements, as witnessed by the various editions of the *Ordo Synodi Episcoporum* published in 1966, 1969, 1971 and 2006. In the meantime, the Code of Canon Law (25th January 1983), canons 342-348, and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (18th October 1990), canon 46, have integrated the Synod into the universal law of the Church, specifying its nature and functioning.

Recently Pope Francis, with the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio* (September 15th 2018), has profoundly renewed the Synod of Bishops, inserting it within the framework of synodality as a constitutive dimension of the Church, at all levels of her existence.

In particular, the Synod is understood as a process composed of three parts: **the preparatory phase**, in which the consultation of the People of God on the themes indicated by the Roman Pontiff takes place; **the celebratory phase**, characterized by the meeting of the assembly of Bishops; and **the implementation phase**, in which the conclusions of the Synod, once approved by the Roman Pontiff, are accepted by the local churches.

The central phase, in which the work of discernment of the Pastors is carried out, is thus preceded and followed by phases that call into play the totality of the People of God, in the plurality of its components.

The Synod – which avails itself of a General Secretariat composed of a General Secretary, an Under-Secretary and a number of special Councils of Bishops – meets in different types of Assembly: in an Ordinary General Assembly, for matters concerning the good of the universal Church; in an Extraordinary General Assembly, for matters of urgent consideration; in a Special Assembly, for matters which mostly concern one or more specific geographical regions. Furthermore, it is also the responsibility of The Roman Pontiff to convene a Synodal Assembly in accordance with other modalities which are established by him.