

Meditations on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary

Cardinal Mario Grech

XVI General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishop



Renew our “Yes” to God

Finding Jesus in the Temple

The first joyful mystery takes us back to the beginning of the Christian adventure: the Angel’s announcement to the Virgin Mary, the revelation that God wanted to become so close to us that He assumed our very humanity in His eternal Son. As we contemplate Mary's "Yes" to God — her fiat from which everything began — we too desire, at the start of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to renew our "Yes" to God. As Pope Francis recalled in his address last Wednesday, during the first General Congregation, the Synod is not meant for "ecclesiastical politics", like in a parliament, but is called to listen and submit to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that overshadowed the Holy Virgin during the Annunciation: it will be the Spirit, then as now, making us obedient to God's will.



Our Missionary Journey

Mary's visit to Elizabeth

Mary's first "fulfillment" after the announcement of divine motherhood is a "missionary journey", the one made quickly to her elderly relative Elizabeth. The Virgin, presented by Vatican II as a "type" of the Church, meaning, as its anticipated realization, shows us that "the pilgrim Church on earth is missionary by its nature" (AG 2). Hence the ongoing reflection on synodality aims for mission: the communion of the baptized with God and among themselves, which must increasingly manifest in everyone's participation, targets a more extroverted Church, more inclined towards the people of our time, simply put, more missionary, modelled after Mary, Mother of the mission.

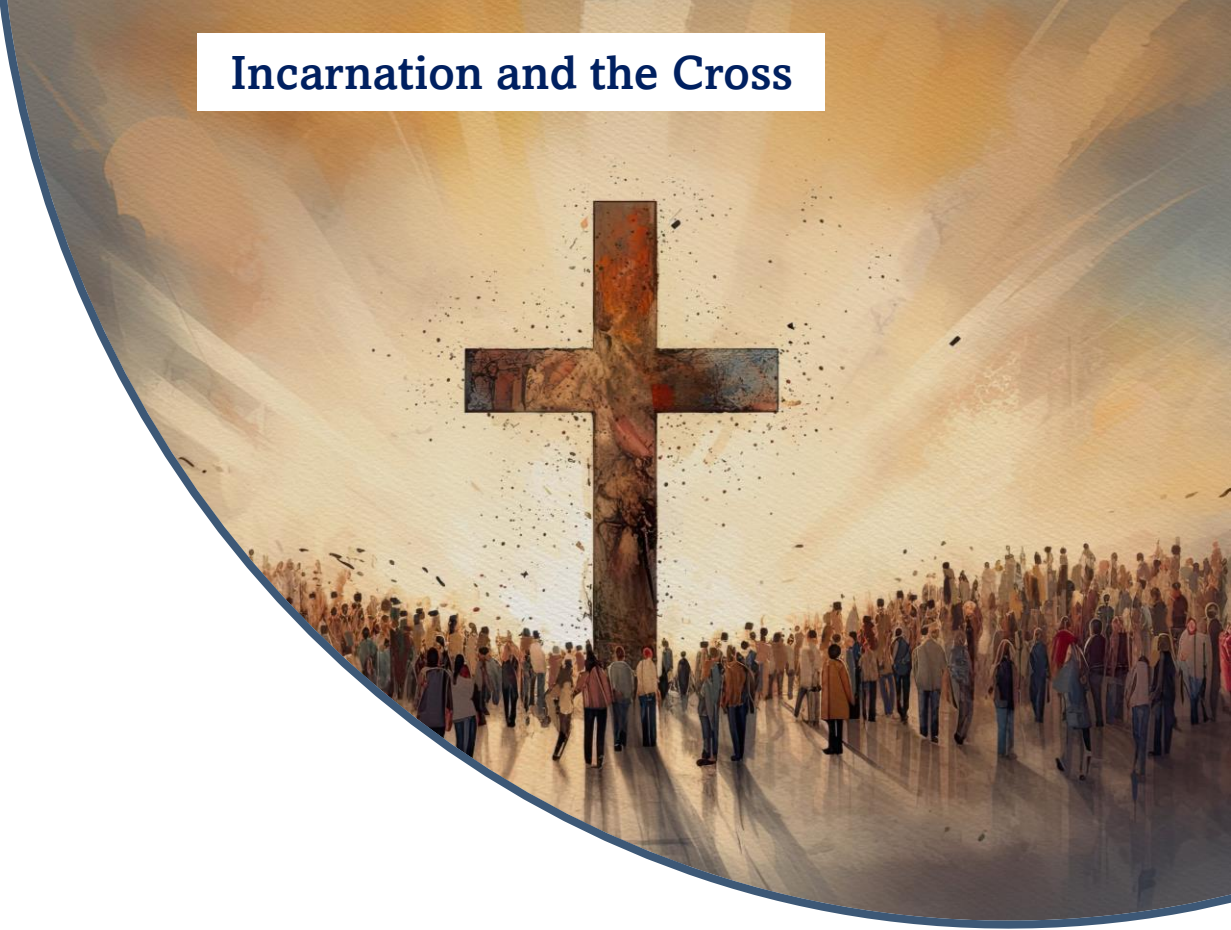


Our Common Mission

The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem

The mystery of the birth of God's Son in Bethlehem's manger, away from his homeland Nazareth and outside the inn, casts a powerful light on the Synodal journey. In the journey's first phase, as in these initial assembly days, the need for a Church more capable of including the poor, the last, the distant, with special attention to migrants and refugees, a pressing issue in all continents, became evident. Using the language of the Council, we might say that migration is a "sign of the times", challenging us believers not only to understand how to meet these brothers' and sisters' material needs but also to "expand" ecclesial spaces so they feel "at home in the Church" and contribute to the common mission.

Incarnation and the Cross



The presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Thanks to the elderly Simeon's prophecy, Jesus' presentation at the Temple and the Virgin Mary's purification are events that already mysteriously fall under the sign of the cross. Jesus is pointed out as a sign of contradiction, while Mary is told a sword will pierce her soul. Joyful and sorrowful mysteries are closely connected, as Incarnation and Cross are inseparable events: as theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar said, "whoever says Incarnation says Cross". In this Rosary decade, we ask the Lord to give the Synod the courage to bear the cross of the men and women of our time, to accept the cross of different visions and perspectives, not to reject the cross of misunderstandings from those who expect from the Synod what it cannot and must not give. The Lord will make all these crosses fruitful for the good of the Church and humanity.

God's will for His Church



Finding Jesus in the Temple

This final mystery is beautiful, making us contemplate the divine wisdom of twelve-year-old Jesus. In the face of this wisdom, the wise and learned of this world — here personified by the Temple of Jerusalem's doctors — find themselves foolish and return to being disciples (cf. 1Cor 3:18-20). Brothers and sisters, I invite you to pray that this "miracle" may also occur in the Synod: all Members — from Cardinals and Bishops to the Lay Faithful, not forgetting the Theologians — are called to abandon their presumed "wisdoms", often just the result of human reasoning, to learn from Lord Jesus, whose Wisdom will help us overcome partial views and allow us to recognize together — on a discernment journey — God's will for His Church.