

A puzzle with many colors

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich

The following are excerpts from the greeting given by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich on October 9, 2021, during the moment of reflection at the Vatican to mark the beginning of the synodal process. Born in Luxembourg, Cardinal Hollerich, a Jesuit, lived and taught extensively in Japan. Appointed Archbishop of Luxembourg in 2011, he was chosen as the General Reporter for the October 2023 Synod of Bishops by Pope Francis in July of 2021.

My intervention is called a greeting, so I would like to greet you all together; bishops, priests, consecrated persons, laity, Christians from all continents, diligent Christians, Christians on the margins of the Church, progressive Christians and conservative Christians... young and old, men and women of all generations, sisters and brothers in search of God or those who are simply curious.

In fact, it is not I who should greet you, we should all greet each other.

Greeting someone means being aware of their presence; greeting someone means letting the other enter my life; it means letting myself be disturbed for the sake of an encounter.

A Synodal church is a relational church, a church of encounter.

We will have meetings at the level of different groups, at the level of dioceses, at the level of episcopal conferences, at the level of continents and finally the General Assembly with the Synodal Fathers in October 2023 in this same room. Our meetings are not one-time meetings but meetings that are planned to last over time. Taking time for one another, walking together.

When we walk, someone must choose a direction for the walk. This role falls to the Holy Spirit. We know these methods of proceeding: sometimes, as at Pentecost, he is manifest and fills our hearts with joy and clarity, a clarity that enlightens and defines our path. Much more often he lets us lead our way with small pieces of a puzzle, a puzzle with many colors that come from all my brothers and sisters. So, we have before us a duty of discernment; we must choose the right pieces one after the other, in a certain order, with the participation of all.

It is a huge puzzle, where everyone can participate, especially the poorest, the voiceless, those on the periphery. If we exclude players, the puzzle will not be complete. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires our interventions and leads us to fulfillment.