

“Gathering of the People of God”

#Together2023

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It began when Brother Aloïs of Taizé shared a dream with Pope Francis and the synod fathers in October 2021: He dreamed of God’s people gathering one day - during the Church’s synodal process - for a major ecumenical gathering open to all Christians of various Churches.

Now, fast forward to the Angelus in St. Peter's Square on January 15, 2023, . . . Pope Francis made this announcement: "The path to Christian unity and the path of synodal conversion of the Church are linked. I would like to take this opportunity to announce that on Saturday September 30th (2023), an ecumenical prayer vigil will be held on St. Peter’s Square, with which we will entrust the work of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops." And he continued, "For the young people coming to the vigil, there will be a special programme throughout that weekend, entrusted to the Taizé community." ¹

The September 30th event will be a moment to pause, breathe and celebrate the unity already fulfilled in Christ and render it visible. It is undoubtedly important to walk together on this synodal journey, to listen reciprocally, reflect and discern together, for mature decisions to take shape. It will happen worldwide, in every Church where the spirit of synodality is hoped for and practiced, conscious that the spiritual dimension of prayer in this process cannot be overlooked. In his First Letter to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul exhorts Christ's followers to a spirit of communal discernment, but also to joy and prayer: "Always seek what is good for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:15 -18).

The September 30 initiative is developing and evolving. In 2022, Brother Aloïs and his community also shared their dream with various Christian movements of different denominations. Subsequently, more than fifty Movements, ecclesial realities, and representatives of different national and international youth ministry services gathered both in July and in November. They met at the Taizé Community in France to reflect together on how the synodal process underway in the Catholic Church could also be a powerful moment in the search for unity among Christians and among the entire human family.

The question of how to encourage youth involvement in this process also arose. The "Gathering of God's people" initiative thus came to the forefront as an ecumenical, intergenerational and intercultural meeting to be held simultaneously in Rome and other parts of the world. It will

take place on the eve of the October 2023 Synod of Bishops meeting with the September 30th prayer vigil at the heart of this initiative. ²

¹ <https://together2023.net/>

² [What is "Together"? - Together 2023](#)