
Nordic countries: bishops' plenary ends. Focus on synodality, Ukraine and fight against human trafficking

“Synodality” has been at the centre of the work of the spring plenary assembly of the Bishops’ Conference of the Nordic Countries, which ended in Tromsø, Norway, today. In particular, the bishops worked on kick-starting the synodal process called for by Pope Francis in the northern European dioceses: coordinators have been appointed in all dioceses, and the bishops are committed to promote the debate on three synodal themes - participation, communion, and mission. In the previous plenary session, the bishops had raised doubts about the possibility of “organizing such a project in our countries with such a small number of Catholics in such a short time”, also in light of the fact that the situation of the diaspora Church has actually generated a small-scale synodal experience in the north. Also, in their letter to the faithful, they had urged not to “focus on church habits, structures and people that are irritating and seem useless to us”, but to examine our own personal fidelity to the Gospel. And it is in this spirit that the bishops of Tromsø wrote a worried letter to their German brothers about their “synodal path”. The plenary session was also an opportunity for an in-depth discussion on the topic of trafficking in human beings, modern slavery and exploitation, exploring whether “prevention is possible in church institutions and organisations”. Participating in this session were also Bishop William Kenney of Birmingham and David Ryall who coordinate the Santa Marta Group set up by Pope Francis.

Valentina Bombelli