
Spain: CEE, “strong personal, community and pastoral conversion” is needed. Critical issues include overcoming clericalism and women in leadership roles in the Church

“To begin incorporating synodality as a fundamental part of the Church’s identity and the ‘synodal style’ that derives from it as a proper way of ‘making’ the Church”. For Spanish Catholics, this is the meaning of Pope Francis’ invitation to participate in the diocesan phase of the Synod. For a “Church on the move”, the final report of the Spanish Church (CEE) reads, “we need to start from a strong personal, communal, and pastoral conversion” and “it is essential to be open, to listen, to reach out to those who need us”. In the awareness that we are “a Church in many ways and, at times, very different from each other. But that plurality must be assumed in terms of complementarity and we must be able to achieve unity without falling into the temptation of imposing uniformity”. The focus is also on prayer, the centrality of the Liturgy, parish life, and the priest’s role. The document also describes “bilateral clericalism”, “an excess of leadership by priests, and shortcomings in the responsibility of the laity”. “The Church is more organized when it comes to the Sacrament of Holy Orders than to the Sacrament of Baptism”, the document reads. Then some “specific issues” have emerged that “have resonated strongly and require further discernment”. The first of these issues is undoubtedly “the role of women in the Church”: their presence in positions of responsibility and decision-making bodies in the Church is key. Then reference is made to the lack of presence and participation of young people in the Church’s life and mission; and to the institutionalization and strengthening of lay ministries. Also, more dialogue is needed on the subjects of optional celibacy and female priesthood. Finally, three issues need to be addressed urgently: growing in synodality, promoting the participation of the laity, and overcoming clericalism. The document also contains some “proposals” for parishes, dioceses, and the universal Church.

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