
Synod. Bishop Baturi: "We want to engage in dialogue and be open to the world"

Despite "certain internal resistances", the desire to "engage in dialogue with the whole of humanity" is a prevailing factor in the synodal path of the Church in Italy, said Monsignor **Giuseppe Baturi**, archbishop of Cagliari and Secretary General of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI), summarising the highlights of the synodal path of the Churches in Italy during the press conference held at the end of the Italian bishops' Permanent Council meeting. "Indeed, there are a number of internal resistances," the prelate acknowledged, "and there is a need to pursue our task with a method that combines attention, dialogue, and the ability to be open to the world in which we live." "The Church should not limit herself to talking about the world, she should listen and let them talk," Baturi said, outlining a positive assessment of the Synod's listening phase, which, for example, saw "workshops of dialogue being created" in the prison world, along with "initiatives by people who have something to say and do with regard to the Church." Answering a question on the feedback from the German synod, which put forward proposals on the blessing of gay couples and the abolition of priestly celibacy, Baturi said: "In the Italian experience these are not prevailing themes." "Exploring viable paths for change" is the roadmap for the continuation of the synodal path, which ended the first stage dedicated to listening, involving, so far, approximately half a million people in Italy. The themes of the press conference included migrations, starting with the tragedy in Cutro, along with the controversy on surrogacy and registering the children of same-sex couples at the registry office. **Migrations.** "We are willing to collaborate, drawing on decades of experience, to broaden the legal channels for safeguarding lives, while stemming the malicious business of criminal organisations", assured Bishop Baturi, answering journalists' questions on migration and referring to the humanitarian corridors. In their final communiqué, the bishops emphasised the "slack responses put in place" in this area, referring to the Cutro tragedy, which he described as "an open wound." "Two public prosecutors decided to initiate criminal proceedings, we cannot comment on this," said the Secretary General of the Italian Bishops: "It is an open wound, people have died off our coasts. We call for concerted action between European States for managing a global phenomenon that can only be tackled in a coordinated manner," the appeal on behalf of the Italian bishops: "A political strategy consisting solely of control, public order, restrictions and refoulement fails to grasp the real problem, which is the defence of human lives. They must be rescued and ensure their integration, which is both feasible and important for everyone, since we all need a new society, starting with job market inclusion." "A comprehensive and far-sighted policy," continued the Secretary General of the Italian Bishops, "must face up to the fact that the freedom to leave must be linked to the freedom to remain, and this is only possible if dignified living conditions are in place." **Surrogacy and children of same-sex couples.** Answering questions from journalists on the registration of children of same-sex couples at the registry office, Bishop Baturi said: "Transforming such sensitive issues, which affect people's lives, into a source of propaganda, or slogans, is a cause for concern. Discussions should focus on suitable legal instruments." "More judicious instruments must be adopted to grant human dignity", was the invitation of the Secretary General of the Italian Bishops' Conference: "If, on the other hand, rifts are exploited to impose a certain approach, the concreteness of human lives risks being forgotten." "The recognition of the children of same-sex couples is not to be equated with the issue concerning the practice of surrogate motherhood," Baturi further specified, pointing out that "most of such practices involve heterosexual couple." When asked to comment on the subject of surrogate motherhood, the CEI Secretary General said that the practice is "unacceptable, because with it, as the Pope has said, there is a risk of commodifying women, especially the poorest women, and of transforming the child into a commodity to be sold." **Abuses.** "In November - Msgr. Baturi announced - we will present the second National Report on Abuse, containing data on all dioceses in Italy." The purpose of the Report, and of those that will follow on an annual basis, said the CEI Secretary General, is "a

diachronic development of the phenomenon and of our ability to deal with it. The Listening Centres have increased since November, while almost all dioceses have already activated Protection Centres for minors. We are now close to covering the whole country.” **TV Mass.** While during the pandemic TV Masses have been “a great resource”, now it is necessary to “recover the normality of Church life as soon as possible”, was bishop Baturi's response to the invitation of Card. Matteo Zuppi, president of the Italian Bishops' Conference, to put an end to live-streamed Church services, widespread during the Covid pandemic. “TV Masses were created to allow persons who could not personally attend church service to join in the prayers”, recalled the Secretary General of the Italian Bishops. “It was a great resource during the pandemic because it helped people to overcome loneliness and come together as a community, not only in liturgical celebrations, but also in catechesis.” “Now the problem,” Baturi said, “is to recover the normality of ecclesial life - which cannot do without that category of the Gospel called encounter - as quickly as possible. We shall look at how to recalibrate the indications once the pandemic has officially ended. This is the time to return to praying together.”

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