
Russia: Mgr. Werth (Novosibirsk), Christmas letter consecrated to the Synod. “Dare and discuss topical issues of Church life”

In his pastoral letter ahead of Christmas, Bishop Joseph Werth of Novosibirsk encourages the faithful to “dare, discuss and debate topical issues of Church life” with reference to the Synod which opened in Rome on 10 October, “as we in Russia celebrated 30 years of religious freedom”. The Bishop recalls the Second Vatican Council and the process of “Repetition of the Council’s teachings”, experienced by the Siberian Diocese in 2012-2015, 50 years after the Council: it was for us an opportunity - even if not fully exploited - to “understand” the journey made by the Church which we “were unable to make, because we were cut off from the Church and from the world by the Iron Curtain”. “In the wake of the Church renewal proposed by the Council”, the Synod is now “both a gift and a task” which “best shows and embodies the nature of the Church as the People of God, itinerant and evangeliser”. The very theme of the Synod “requires the active participation of the whole Church”. For this reason, Mgr. Werth goes on to exhort: “Imagine, paint for yourself an image of the Church we must strive for. What do you particularly like about the Church that you would like to continue to support and develop? And what in the Church, what events fill you with sadness or even shame, and how can we redress the situation?”. The main question for all remains: “How can this ‘journeying together’, which allows the Church to proclaim the Gospel according to the mission entrusted to her, take place today on different levels (from local to universal)? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow as a synodal Church?”.

Sarah Numico