



The Holy See

MEETING WITH THE SYNOD FATHERS FOR A LUNCHEON
FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Atrium of Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 23 October 2010*

Dear friends,

In keeping with the lovely tradition created by Pope John Paul ii, a Synod concludes with a luncheon; this friendly custom fits well with the atmosphere of this Synod, which speaks of communion. This communion was not only discussed, but also realized.

I would like to take this opportunity to say ‘thank you’. Thank you to the Secretary General of the Synod and his staff, who prepared and are still also preparing the follow-up to the work. Thank you to the Presidents-Delegate and thank you especially to the Relator and the Deputy Secretary who did a marvellous job. Thanks! I was also once the Relator of the Synod on the Family, so I can imagine all the work that you have had to do. Thank you also to all the Fathers who gave a voice to the Church in the East, to the Auditors, to the Fraternal Delegates, to everyone!

Communion and testimony. At this moment we thank the Lord for the communion that he gave and gives to us. We have seen the abundance and the diversity of this communion. You are all Churches with different rites that nevertheless constitute, together with all the other rites, the one Catholic Church. It is beautiful to see this true catholicity that is so rich in diversity, so rich in possibilities in different cultures. Indeed, this is the way the polyphony of the one faith grows into one true communion of hearts that only the Lord can give us. For this experience of communion we thank the Lord and I thank all of you. It seems to me that communion is perhaps the most

important gift of the Synod that we have lived and realized. Communion connects us all and is, in itself, testimony.

Communion. Catholic and Christian communion is an open and dialogic communion. Thus, we were also in permanent dialogue, internally and externally, with our Orthodox brothers and with other ecclesial Communities. We felt that in this we are united, even if there are exterior divisions. We felt the profound communion in the Lord, in the gift of his Word, with his life, and we hope that the Lord will guide us as we proceed in this profound communion.

We are united with the Lord and so, we can say, we “find” ourselves in Truth. This Truth does not close, it does not set boundaries, rather it opens them. Therefore, we were also in frank and open dialogue with our brother Muslims, brother Jews, everyone together responsible for the gift of peace, for peace precisely in that part of the land blessed by the Lord, the cradle of Christianity as well as two other religions. We desire to continue on this path with strength, tenderness, humility and on the courage of the truth that is love and opens to love.

I stated before that we are concluding this Synod with a luncheon. But the true conclusion is tomorrow in true fellowship with the Lord in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist, in reality, is not a conclusion, but an opening. The Lord walks with us, he is with us, and the Lord gets us going. So, in this sense, we are in Synod, that is on a common path that continues even once we part: we are in Synod, on a common journey. We pray that the Lord may help us. Thank you all!

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