



## REFLECTION SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

For the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) [www.crc-canada.org](http://www.crc-canada.org)  
By Sr. Lorraine d'Entremont, s.c., Br. Daniel Cadrin, o.p., and Ms. Sabrina Di Matteo  
(Members of the Theological Commission of the CRC)

### PART 1 – FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER 2023 SYNODAL ASSEMBLY REPORT

#### 1.1 Comments on the Synthesis, no. 10b

##### *Observations*

- Many institutes of consecrated life have reflected internally on synodality in the Church and in their communities, especially during the first phase of the Synod. However, we observe that the next steps are no longer a concern for some institutes, especially in this period of fragility and completion for many of them, as governance has become a higher priority. Moreover, synodal and missionary reflections seem to be more concerned with dioceses and parishes.
- The Canadian Religious Conference did not wait for the Synod to implement synodal approaches. The preparation, process and follow-up of the last two General Assemblies (2021 and 2023) have been facilitated in a synodal spirit of communal discernment, involving the leadership teams of the institutes, with the coordination of the national office, despite the challenges of a vast bilingual network.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Issues and questions*

- The relative lack of interest in synodality on the part of some institutes entails the risk of a portion of consecrated life turning in on itself, living a more or less conscious synodality internally, without feeling called to contribute to the wider Church.
- How can we bring out the richness of the synodality present in institutes as a heritage for the Church? How can we combine *inter-ecclesial* synodality, i.e. between consecrated life, parishes and the diocese?

#### 1.2 Comments on the Synthesis, no. 10 g (proposal to review *Mutuae Relationes*)

##### *Observation*

The issues raised in *Mutuae relationes* concerning structures and relationships between different types of groups are not new. A *missionary synodality* would involve reviewing precisely how consecrated life, parishes and dioceses recognize each other and collaborate for the benefit of evangelization and the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>1</sup> The CRC's network comprises some 240 members, the Major Superiors of institutes of consecrated life (women and men), including Francophones and Anglophones.

### *Issues and questions*

- More and more often, consecrated women and men are called upon to make up for the lack of parish pastoral resources (priests, animators, catechists, etc.). This entails the risk of instrumentalizing consecrated persons by placing them at the service of the particular Church, without respecting and recognizing the charism of their institute (which may be a non-parochial apostolate, for example).
- In order to recognize the diversity of ecclesial forms in the life and mission of the local Church, shouldn't we concretely foster links between consecrated persons, lay people and clerics?

For example, instead of focusing on the parish as the starting point and end point of Christian life, how can we consider the other places where the Gospel is lived out: works of justice, monasteries and convents, youth networks, movements, etc.? The missionary perspective would thus embrace the diversity of realities.

- In this perspective of mutuality, how can we reflect on the legacy of consecrated life for the future of the Church in Canada, particularly regarding women's leadership and ministries, decolonization and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, integral ecology, Christian education and theological formation institutes?

## **PART 2 – CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHASE *TOWARDS OCTOBER 2024***

### *Observations*

The turnaround time allotted for this stage was insufficient to properly plan the work, in addition to adding to other projects already underway. This limited our ability to consult and engage a synodal process with our network members.<sup>2</sup>

### *Issues and questions*

- Given the fragility of many institutes, what kind of synodality can continue to exist between them and within religious conferences? Is synodality the sole responsibility of major superiors? Could we imagine a more "charismatic" synodality?

That is, depending on charisms (apostolate, contemplation, new evangelization, social works, etc.), could we reach out more effectively to the various forms of consecrated life (new communities, associations of the faithful) and "spiritual families" (lay associates and lay employees)?

- In Canada, we've been attentive to several areas of focus for consecrated life over the past few years. Could synodality be the key to implementing or revitalizing them?
  - o Renewing and supporting mutual knowledge and collaboration between new religious communities, long-established institutes, and other ecclesial associations (Synthesis no. 10c);
  - o Take into account the challenges of interculturality in mission;
  - o Take into account the different generations and their various concerns (older consecrated persons, isolated younger leaders...).

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<sup>2</sup> The documents were received in December 2023-January 2024 and this report is due May 15.