

# First Extraordinary General Assembly - Cooperation between the Holy See and the Episcopal Conferences (11 October-28 October 1969)

First Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

***In Session: 11 October - 28 October 1969***

***Synod Fathers: 146***

***Topic: "The Cooperation between the Holy See and the Episcopal Conferences"***

This specially convoked General Assembly had as its agenda to seek and examine ways and means of putting into practice the collegiality of bishops with the Pope, a subject which gained much attention in the declarations on the Church formulated at the Second Vatican Council. This meeting opened the door to wider participation by the bishops with the Pope and each other in the pastoral care of the universal Church.

The main emphasis of these sessions involved two basic points: 1. the collegiality of the bishops with the Pope; 2. the relation of Episcopal Conferences to the Pope and to individual bishops. Various recommendations were subsequently submitted to the Pope, three of which received immediate attention: 1. that the Synod meet at regular intervals, every two years (subsequently changed to every 3 years); 2. that the General Secretariat operate between Synodal sessions and organize these meetings; 3. that the bishops be permitted to suggest topics for the future assemblies.

Between the second and third Synodal assemblies, an advisory Council for the General Secretariat was formed made up of 12 elected bishops and 3 papal appointees. Such a Council first met from 12-15 May 1970 and was intended to facilitate communication with episcopal conferences and the formulation of the agenda for the subsequent assembly. After this meeting a general consultation of the bishops worldwide was begun for suggested topics for future assemblies. Such consultation now begins in the final days of a synodal Assembly. Since that time the Council of the General Secretariat, elected from each Synod in light of preparation for the following Synod, has become a permanent feature of the General Secretariat.

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