

First Special Assembly for Africa - The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: 'You Shall Be My Witnesses' (Acts 1:8) (10 April-8 May 1994)

First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops

In Session: 10 April - 8 May 1994

Synod Fathers: 242

Topic: "The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: 'You Shall Be My Witnesses' (Acts 1, 8)"

On 6 January 1989 the Holy Father announced his intention to convene this Special Assembly and appointed a Pre-Preparatory Commission, made up primarily of members of the African episcopate. The following June, this group was expanded to constitute the Council of the General Secretariat, and entrusted with helping prepare for the synodal Assembly. In conjunction with the meeting of representatives of the African episcopate in Lomé, Togo, July, 1990, the *Lineamenta* document "outlining" the Synod topic was published, beginning a period of prayerful reflection on the local level. The responses from the local Churches were used in formulating the Special Assembly's "working paper" or *Instrumentum laboris*, released during the Holy Father's Ninth Pastoral Visit to Africa, Kampala (Uganda), February, 1993.

With this document as a point of reference, the Synod Fathers discussed in the month long session the general topic of evangelization from the following perspectives: 1. Proclamation of the Message; 2. Inculturation; 3. Dialogue; 4. Justice and Peace; 5. Means of Social Communication. In addition to the lively and in-depth discussion of the topic during the various phases of Synodal activity, a highlight of the Special Assembly were the opening and closing ceremonies which incorporated many elements from liturgical traditions in Africa.

The resulting documentation includes a lengthy ***Message to the People of God***, released at the conclusion of the Special Assembly, and the *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Africa"* of 14 September 1995, signed and presented to the Church in conjunction with the Synodal visit to Africa by the Holy Father, 14-20 September 1995, for the Special Assembly's celebration phase.

President-Delegates

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Francis Arinze, Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per il Dialogo Inter-Religioso (Vaticano)

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Christian Wiyghan Tumi, Arcivescovo di Garoua (Camerun)

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Paulos Tzadua, Arcivescovo di Addis Abeba (Etiopia)

General Secretary

S.E.R. Mons. Jan Pieter Schotte, C.I.C.M., Arcivescovo tit. di Silli (Vaticano)

General Rapporteurs

S.Em.R. il Sig. Card. Hyacinthe Thiandoum, Arcivescovo di Dakar (Senegal)

Relatore Generale Aggiunto

S.E.R. Mons. John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, Arcivescovo di Abuja (Nigeria)

Special Secretaries

S.E.R. Mons. Jaime Pedro Gonçalves, Arcivescovo di Beira (Mozambico)

S.E.R. Mons. Robert Sarah, Arcivescovo di Conakry (Guinea)

Documents of the First Special Assembly for Africa

Esortazione Apostolica post-sinodale *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 settembre 1995)

[Francese, Inglese, Italiano, Latino, Polacco, Portoghese, Spagnolo, Tedesco]

Instrumentum laboris [Inglese]

Lineamenta

[Inglese]