

General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops

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The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops



Chapter VII

The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops

Article 11

The Constitution of the General Secretariat of the Synod

§ 1. The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops is a permanent institution in service of the Synod, and established as a connection between the various synodal assemblies.

§ 2. The General Secretary and the Council of the Secretariat are part of the General Secretariat, each according to his task.

Article 12

The Appointment of the General Secretary, His Responsibilities and Collaborators

§1. The General Secretary is appointed by the Roman Pontiff and exercises his responsibilities at the discretion of the Roman Pontiff.

§ 2. It is the responsibility of the General Secretary to carry out the directives of the Roman Pontiff and to communicate to him all matters related to the Synod of Bishops.

§ 3. The General Secretary participates as a Member in synodal assemblies. At the beginning of synodal work, he presents a *Report* on the preparation of the Synod, directs the operation of the General Secretariat and undersigns all its activities.

§ 4. It is equally the task of the General Secretary to prepare the work of the Council of the Secretariat and to serve as moderator at the meetings.

§ 5. The General Secretary has the further duty:

1^o to send, at the mandate of the Roman Pontiff, letters convoking the Synod along with the agenda of each individual assembly, as well as documents, instructions and pertinent information for the same assembly;

2^o to communicate to all to whom it pertains the names of the Members or Synod Fathers freely designated by the Roman Pontiff, according to the norms of n. X, of the Apostolic Letter, *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, 15 September 1965; in addition to communicate the appointment by the Roman Pontiff of the President-Delegate, General Relator and Special Secretary for each assembly;

3^o to report to the Roman Pontiff on the work done by the Council of the General Secretariat;

4^o to prepare the proceedings of each assembly, submitting to the Roman Pontiff, the topic for treatment and the list of Members for the necessary ratification;

5^o to oversee, during the synod, the assignment of tasks to various Members, while avoiding assigning many to any one Member;

6^o to transmit a report on the proceedings of each assembly to the Synod Fathers, Patriarchs, Major Archbishops and Metropolitans of the Metropolitan Churches *sui iuris*, Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and the President of the Union of Superiors General;

7^o to carry out what the Synod of Bishops might entrust to him;

8^o to collect, put in order and preserve the acts and documents of the Synod.

§ 6. The collaborators of the General Secretary, appointed by him with the approval of the Roman Pontiff, are subject to him.

§ 7. The same collaborators are chosen from among ecclesiastics who are properly disposed to the work through their knowledge and prudence.

§ 8. If need be, some specialists in technical matters can be enlisted by the General Secretary, with the approval of the Roman Pontiff.

Article 13

The Constitution of the Council of the General Secretariat, Its Tasks and Meetings

§ 1. At the end of each ordinary general synodal assembly, the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat is formed.

§ 2. The Council is comprised of 15 Members; 12 of whom are elected from the Synod, taking into account the representation of Bishops scattered throughout the world, and 3 designated by the Roman Pontiff.

§ 3. The selection of Members is done through an election which has the force of law, when, after subtracting invalid ballots, an absolute majority of votes is cast in favor of a person, or after the first ineffective balloting, the relative majority is received on a second ballot. If, however, the votes are equal, the matter proceeds according to the norms of canon 119, 1º, in *The Code of Canon Law*.

§ 4. The Bishops elected to the Council of the General Secretariat retain their proper office until the beginning of a new Ordinary General Assembly.

§ 5. The Council of the General Secretariat is to give assistance to the General Secretary:

1º in examining everything as proposed by the Synod of Bishops and the Council of the Hierarchy of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the Episcopal Conferences, the Departments of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General on the questions to be treated at the Synod, bearing in mind the contents of Article 1, § 1, 2º;

2º in preparing the work for treatment at the next assembly of the Synod;

3º in offering advice on those things proposed by the Synod and approved by the Roman Pontiff; and

4º finally, in other questions which the Roman Pontiff will have assigned to them.

§ 6. The Members of the Council of the General Secretariat are convoked by the General Secretary twice a year and in addition, as often as, subject to the judgment of the Roman Pontiff, it will seem opportune.

§ 7. Analogous to Ordinary General Assemblies, Special Councils of the General Secretariat are formed at the conclusion of a Special Assembly for a period of five years, after which the Roman Pontiff is to decide whether to abolish the Council, re-confirm it or substitute Members.

(Extract from: Ordo Synodi Episcoporum)