

**REMARKS OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DINNER WITH ATTENDEES AT THE CONRAD N. HILTON
CATHOLIC SISTERS INITIATIVE 2024 U.S. CONVENING
HILTON WASHINGTON D.C./ROCKVILLE – ROCKVILLE, MD
OCTOBER 17, 2024**

As we pray and as we enjoy our meal together this evening, let us keep in mind those who are gathered in Rome right now in the midst of the Synod General Assembly. Clearly, it is your desire to carry out this Convening in the spirit of synodality, as reflected by the theme that you have chosen: **Embracing a Shared Vision: Impact, Learning, and Collaboration in Service of the Common Good.**

Let's never forget that the first action of every synodal process – of every work of the Church – is to *listen*. The Church herself is the Bride of Christ; and as Bride, she must listen in order to hear the voice of the Bridegroom calling her, inviting her to an encounter and a shared life with him. So too, we must listen attentively to each other. Not with our minds made up about what we are going to say when the person stops speaking, but actually listening to what the other person says, with an openness to greater understanding, not only of the person's ideas, but of the person herself. As Fr. Timothy Radcliffe said, who preached the retreat before the opening of the Synod: "If we listen to each other's questions with respect and without fear, we shall find a new way to live in the Spirit."¹

And that's the key, which we can't forget: the Holy Spirit is the protagonist! The Spirit is the one who gives life to the Church. The Spirit is the Author of her mission. The Spirit will lead us in the way to engage the world, to respond to its challenges, and to find new pathways for uplifting human dignity and serving the common good in the name of Christ. If we let the Spirit lead the Church, instead of trying to take control ourselves, we can also allow multiple perspectives and gifts within the Church to co-exist, and to act in harmony with one another for the good of the world.

And so, trusting in the Spirit who is with us, let us pray ...

¹ Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., Synod Retreat Meditation n. 1: "Resurrection: Searching in the Dark", 30 September 2024.