Vatican



Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, leaves a session of the Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment at the Vatican Oct. 18. (CNS/Paul Haring)

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The church needs to further integrate women into ecclesial life to confront the problems of clericalism and an exaggerated sense of masculinity, a Vatican official told the Synod of Bishops.

In his address to the synod members Oct. 18, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, said he agreed with the working document's assertion that there sometimes is "an ecclesial inability to recognize, welcome and foster the creativity of the 'feminine genius.' "

"The participation of authoritative women in the discussion has shown us that it is possible and necessary to accelerate the processes of struggle against the 'machista' culture and clericalism, to develop respect for women and the recognition of their charisms as well as their equal integration in the life of society and the church," the cardinal said.

The importance of women, as well as a proposed Synod of Bishops "on the theme of the woman in the life and mission of the church," were discussed in-depth during the March 6-9 plenary meeting of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, the cardinal recalled.

Ouellet, who also serves as president of the commission, said the plenary assembly ended with a call "for a 'cultural conversion' of the church, for a new season of recognition and promotion of women not only in Latin America but also in the world."

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"There's a lot to do, it's urgent! We wondered if a universal synod on this issue would be opportune," he said. "Such a perspective seems to me to be fundamental today to meet the concerns of young people."

The Canadian prelate also emphasized that young people today need to be enriched in their lives by discovering "Jesus' trinitarian identity" which he found "not quite explicit" in the synod's working document.

The working document's lack of references to the sacraments, especially confirmation, as well as the importance of establishing a relationship with Christ needs to be addressed when reflecting "on vocation, accompaniment and discernment," Ouellet said.

"If we want young people to make the choice of following Jesus," he said, "they must learn who Jesus is: the beloved who comes to meet us to make us discover the Father through him, in the communion of the Holy Spirit."

This story appears in the **Synod on the Youth 2018** feature series. View the full series.