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A gray-haired white man wearing a clerical collar smiles. The Vatican press conference backd

Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the synod, speaks to reporters after presenting the working document for the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican press office June 20. (CNS/Lola Gomez)



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The Vatican is asking all baptized people, regardless of whether they will be in Rome, to participate in October's assembly of the Synod of Bishops with their prayers.

In a letter directed to all bishops released Sept. 15, Cardinal Mario Grech, synod secretary-general, asked the world's bishops "to pray for the synod and to urge every Christian community in your particular church, especially monastic communities, toward unanimous and incessant prayer."

"The synod is first and foremost an event of prayer and listening that does not solely involve the members of the synodal assembly, but every baptized person, every particular church," the letter read. "Indeed, all are called in this moment to join ourselves to the communion of prayer and in the insistent invocation of the Holy Spirit so it may guide us in the discernment of what the Lord asks today of his church."

The cardinal's letter includes a blessing to be recited at the end of Sunday Masses Sept. 24 and Oct. 1, the two Sundays before the assembly opens Oct. 4. He also sent out prayer intentions for the church, bishops and other participants in the assembly, theologians, young people and all Christians. One asks that "the entire people of God, in a dynamism of communion, may feel that they are truly participating in the life of the church."

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In a statement, the Vatican said the letter also was sent to the leaders of the Eastern Catholic churches "with a request to implement a similar blessing and intercessions in their Divine Liturgies."

It also noted other efforts to create a prayerful environment during the synod, such as the ecumenical prayer vigil to be held in St. Peter's Square Sept. 30 and a three-day spiritual retreat for members of the assembly prior to its opening.

In his letter, Grech wrote, "To pray for the synodal assembly, to intercede for all of its members, firstly the Holy Father who so often asks us to pray for him, is to realize the highest level of participation."

The cardinal identified four modes of prayer for people to join themselves to the synod: listening, adoration, intercession and thanksgiving.

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