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Many people stand around many round tables in a domed hall. Pope Francis is visible at a table.

Pope Francis and members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops begin their work with prayer Oct. 20, 2023, in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



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Vatican City — October 20, 2023

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Members of the Synod of Bishops will issue a "Letter to the People of God" at the close of the first session of the synod assembly, which ends Oct. 29, the Vatican said.

The letter, the drafting of which was approved by the synod assembly, will be discussed both during small group working sessions and among the entire assembly Oct. 23 after a Mass for synod participants in St. Peter's Basilica, the synod general secretariat announced in a statement Oct. 19.

It added that additional time will be made for synod participants to discuss the methodology and steps for the next phase of the synodal process to take place between the first session's close Oct. 29 and the second session scheduled to take place at the Vatican in October 2024. The statement said the assembly's synthesis document will not be presented to and discussed by synod participants in two parts -- "A" and "B" -- as originally indicated on the synod's schedule.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, relator general of the assembly, will present the outline for the synod's synthesis document to participants Oct. 25, which will be read by each participant individually before being discussed both in small groups and at a general congregation the afternoon of Oct. 25 and the morning of Oct. 26.

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The entire synod assembly will meet in a general congregation in the afternoon of Oct. 26 "to gather proposals on methods and stages for the months between the first and second sessions" of the synod assembly rather than hold small group working sessions to discuss the synthesis document, as was originally scheduled.

The synod general secretariat announced that working sessions originally scheduled for the afternoon of Oct. 23 and for the whole day Oct. 24 will not be held.

Participants were also encouraged to attend a prayer for peace in St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 27, on which no sessions were scheduled.

This story appears in the **Synod on Synodality** feature series. [View the full series.](#)