Vatican

Vatican News



Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, arrives in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall for a working session of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops Oct. 20. (CNS/Lola Gomez)



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Pope Francis' ongoing summit on the future of the Catholic Church, which has drawn some 450 delegates from across the globe for closely watched discussions at the Vatican, is a sign to the world that there are "very acute and very pressing" needs right now in many countries, said Cardinal Michael Czerny.

In an exclusive interview with National Catholic Reporter, Czerny said the Oct. 4-29 Synod of Bishops is "a reminder that our prayer is not dictated by what are the headlines, no matter how alarming, but by the needs of God's people, and those needs are very acute and very pressing, really, around the world."

Czerny, a synod member and the head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, spoke to NCR as part of "The Vatican Briefing" podcast. He reflected mainly on Francis' moving Oct. 19 prayer vigil in St. Peter's Square for migrants and refugees.

"I was ... moved by just the feeling of gathering, the bringing together of God's people," said the Jesuit cardinal about the prayer. "This feeling that we are church, and not because we're identical, which maybe was a false concept of Catholicity in the past; not because we're identical, but because we're so different, and yet called by the one Lord to follow him and guided by the one spirit whom he promised to us."



Susan Pascoe arrives for a session of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall Oct. 17. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

Czerny spoke for an episode of "The Vatican Briefing" podcast that also features Susan Pascoe, a distinguished Australian church and government leader who is participating in the synod as a nonvoting expert.

Pascoe, who was also part of a group of some 30 theologians and pastoral workers who crafted the widely-praised document for the synod's continental phase, said the assembly members feel a responsibility "to keep an integrity and an authenticity" to the process, and to represent Catholics' real concerns.

"If this is going to be a process where we really allow the Holy Spirit to speak from the grassroots, then we, we have to have a process of integrity," said Pascoe, board president of the Australian Council for International Development, the chief body for Australian nongovernmental organizations involved in international development and humanitarian action.

"I think there's also an awareness that we're a privileged group here in Rome, and winning the hearts and minds of all that need to be involved — all the bishops, all the priests, all the religious, all the laypeople — it's a massive exercise," she said.

As the synod prepares to conclude at the end of this week, Pascoe, who was previously the inaugural commissioner for the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission, said her hope was that the assembly would release a final document that has "a real focus on using accessible language so that all of the people of God can take the text and make sense of it."

The episode of "The Vatican Briefing" featuring NCR's interviews with Czerny and Pascoe is available below. You can also subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or however you listen to podcasts.

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Relevant links for this week's episode:

- Christopher White's reporting on the opening session of the synod's final week: Synod enters final week recalling Vatican II and the church's 'living tradition'
- Christopher White's reporting on the testimony at the Synod of Bishops about an LGBTQ suicide: Story of LGBTQ youth's suicide led synod delegates to cry, Radcliffe reveals
- Catholic News Service coverage of Pope Francis' Oct. 19 prayer vigil: At synod prayer service, pope calls for immigration reform with a heart
- Catholic News Service coverage of Cardinal Michael Czerny's remarks at an Oct. 19 Vatican briefing on the Synod: Church hierarchy has 'nothing to fear' from synodality, cardinal says

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- Catholic News Service coverage of Pope Francis' call for a day of fasting and prayer for the Israel-Palestine conflict, and other global conflicts: Pope calls for world day of prayer for peace as catastrophe looms in Gaza
- Christopher White's coverage of the meeting in Frascati, Italy, to draft the document for the synod's continental phase: Synod advisers meet outside Rome to consider 'time for change' in Catholic Church
- Joshua McElwee and Christopher White's previous "The Vatican Briefing" podcast interview with Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst, Australia: Exclusive: Bishop on synod drafting committee expresses openness to women deacons
- Catholic News Service coverage of the Australian plenary council's final document on the status of women in the Catholic Church: Australia council concludes with agreement on equal dignity of men, women
- Joshua McElwee's coverage of the beginning of Australia's fifth plenary council: Cardinal Pell's release stokes concerns about Australia's plenary council
- Christopher White's coverage of the 2023 Synod of Bishops' debates on gay Catholics: LGBTQ Catholics subject of emotional debate at synod, participants say

This story appears in the **Synod on Synodality** and **The Vatican Briefing** feature series.

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