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Xavière Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary of the synod, responds to a question during a news conference at the Vatican Sept. 8, 2023. (CNS/Justin McLellan)



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As the Vatican prepares to host the second part of Pope Francis' major summit on the future of the Catholic Church this October, one of the event's main organizers said a central purpose of the gathering is to create "a new style of leadership" for the global faith institution.

In an exclusive interview with National Catholic Reporter in late January, Xavière Sr. Nathalie Becquart said that, through the October 2023 and 2024 assemblies of the Synod of Bishops, Francis is creating "a path of conversion" toward "a new way to exercise the authority" in the church.

Becquart, an undersecretary at the Vatican's office for the Synod of Bishops, also described the synodal process as "the Second Vatican Council in a nutshell."

"I really see that what we are doing is really to continue to implement the Second Vatican Council," she said, speaking in an interview at the synod office for NCR's "The Vatican Briefing" podcast.

Francis has called the two synod assemblies to discuss a wide range of issues facing the global Catholic Church, including women's leadership, priestly celibacy, and ministry to LGBTQ Catholics.

The first assembly ended on Oct. 29, but postponed action on most of the hot-button issues until the upcoming 2024 assembly.

In her interview for "The Vatican Briefing," Becquart discussed in particular the synod's ongoing consideration of women's leadership in the church.

"We have also emphasized that, at this time, what is also very important … [is] to continue to put into practice many things or many ways that are already possible to put into practice, for becoming more and more a synodal church," she said.

"That means calling more women [to] leadership in different church bodies and in dioceses, in bishops' conferences, Catholic Charities, in Catholic universities," said Becquart. "Finding ways to move, to go forward, to have more and more women in leadership."

"For many things you don't need to wait, you know, [for] the end of the synod," she said.

The full episode of the podcast is available here:

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