

POPE TO SECRETARIAT COUNCIL OF THE SYNOD

On 27 October the Holy Father received in audience the Cardinals and other Prelates who are members of the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. They had taken part in the meeting which had lasted from 24 to 27 October. After an introductory address of homage by Cardinal Maurice Roy, His Holiness gave the following address.

Venerable Brothers,

We are happy to greet you once again, as you come back to Rome to deal in common with affairs regarding the Synod of Bishops. We are sincerely delighted with your prompt zeal which is also a witness to the vigour and efficiency of your Commission.

The Synod of Bishops has already become a definite and conspicuous ecclesiastical institution. We are still consoling ourself with the memory of the meeting held last year, but our thoughts are already directed toward the next one. It is of importance then to know just what the result of your discussion will be concerning the exact date of this next session. For on that occasion the delegates will also be questioned about the length of time to be allowed between the future meetings of the Synod.

COLLEGIAL NATURE OF BISHOPS

But the discussion which We just mentioned concerns first of all the topic or topics of the coming session, and also the changes which perhaps will have to be introduced into the procedural rules of the Synod.

In this work of yours We really discern a practical realization of the collegial nature of Bishops, who, as the Second Vatican Council points out, "are consecrated not only for a particular diocese but for the salvation of the whole world" (*Ad Gentes*, 39). Thus the episcopal charism is extended and shares

to a certain greater degree in the work of governing universal Church, in so far as the Bishops, summoned by the Supreme Pontiff, work closer together with him in the fulfilment of his own duty.

Here we also note other advantages which are a source of consolation: greater agreement of minds and wills in applying canonical regulations; unanimity of action; brotherly assistance, according to the word of the Apostle: "Each one carry the other's burden" (Gal. 6, 2); spiritual solidarity in faith and charity; that precious "sensus Ecclesiae"; and finally the consciousness that we are a "mystical body" and that Christ is in us and among us.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH

As is very clear, this universal view of things in no way detracts from the importance which is rightly assigned to each Bishop as the ruler of the diocese; on the contrary, their dignity and authority in this regard were completely recognized and emphasized by the Council. Consequently this relationship of solidarity and mutual aid between the local and the universal Church underlines the very life of the mystical body of Christ.

It is this vision of the Church, welded together in such an extraordinary and vital way, which you yourselves present to Us, Venerable Brothers. And so as We pray that the work in which you are now conscientiously engaging will produce results which will be for the good and profit of the whole Church, We impart to you with affection Our Apostolic Blessing.

**Let us Pray for our Bishops
on the Occasion of the
Annual CBBCP Meeting.**

**January 29-February 3, 1973
Baguio City**