



The Holy See

LUNCHEON WITH SYNODAL FATHERS AND BISHOPS
WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Friday, 12 October 2012*

*Your Holiness,
Your Grace,
Dear Brothers,*

First of all I would like to announce an act of mercy, that is, this evening, we will not be starting at 4:30 p.m. — that seems inhumane to me — but at quarter to 6.

Crowning the Synod with a lunch together is a lovely tradition started by [Pope John Paul II](#). For me it is a great joy to have on my right His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomaios, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and, on my other side, Archbishop Rowan Williams of the Anglican Communion.

For me this communion is a sign that we are on the path toward unity and that in our hearts we are moving forward. The Lord will help us to move forward, in an exterior way too. This joy, it seems to me, might also give us strength in the mandate of evangelization. *Synodus* means a “shared walk”, “walking together”, and so the word *synodus* makes me think of the famous walk of the Lord with the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, who are to a certain extent an image of the agnostic world of today. Jesus, their hope, had died: the world was empty. It seemed that either God did not exist or that he had no interest in us. With this despair in their hearts, and yet with a little flame of faith, they walk on. Mysteriously, the Lord walks beside them and helps them to understand better the mystery of God, his presence in history, his silent walk with us. In the end, at supper, when the words of the Lord and the disciple’s listening have already inflamed their hearts and illuminated their minds, they recognize him at the meal and finally their hearts begin to see.

Thus in the Synod we are walking together with our contemporaries. We pray to the Lord that he may illuminate us, that he may light up our hearts so they may become prophetic, that he may illuminate our minds; and we pray that at supper, in the Eucharistic communion, we may truly be open, see him, and thus shine out in the world and bring his light to this world of ours.

In this sense, the supper — as the Lord often used lunch and supper as a symbol of the Kingdom of God — might also be for us a symbol of our walking together and an opportunity to pray to the Lord that he accompany us and help us. In this sense, let us now say the prayer of thanksgiving...

Have a good rest and I will see you in the Synod Hall! Thank you!