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II SYNOD DIECEZJI KOSZALIŃSKO-KOŁOBRZESKIEJ W HISTORYCZNO-TEOLOGICZNEJ PERSPEKTYWIE SYNODALNOŚCI KOŚCIOŁA

THE SECOND SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF KOSZALIN-KOŁOBRZEG IN THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE SYNODALITY OF THE CHURCH

Streszczenie

Synodalność Kościoła od samego początku ukazuje wspólnotę wiary jako jeden lud pielgrzymujący, w którym każdy ma swoje miejsce i dzieli odpowiedzialność za Kościół. Współcześnie praktyka Kościoła kładzie duży akcent na zaangażowanie wiernych świeckich w troskę o Kościół i przez prawodawstwo umożliwia im również udział we władzy kościelnej. Wyrazem wspólnej odpowiedzialności i przejawem synodalności na szczeblu partykularnym był II Synod Diecezji Koszalińsko-Koło-brzeskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: synodalność, synod, kolegalność, prawo kanoniczne, II Synod Diecezji Koszalińsko-Koło-brzeskiej

Abstract

THE SECOND SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF KOSZALIN-KOŁOBRZEG (KOŁOBRZEG) IN THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE SYNODALITY OF THE CHURCH

From the very beginning, the synodality of the Church shows the community of faith as one pilgrim people, in which everyone has their place and also a responsibility for the Church. In modern times, the practice of the Church places great emphasis on the involvement of the lay faithful in the care of the Church and, through legislation, also enables them to participate in Church authority. The Second Synod of the Koszalin-Koło-brzeg (Koło-brzeg) Diocese was an expression of shared responsibility and a manifestation of synodality at the particular level.

Keywords: synodality, synod, collegiality, canon law, II Synod of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg (Kołobrzeg) Diocese

Introduction

From the very beginning of the Church's existence, it has been accompanied by the phenomenon of decentralized responsibility and collective reflection on its reality and functioning. In addition to the sphere of managing the emerging church administration, it touched no less the discernment of God's will in the face of specific difficulties affecting articles of faith or discipline¹. In the twentieth century, the Church wished to return to its roots in order to rethink itself. The accompanying event was the Second Vatican Council, which became the main engine of change in all spheres of the Church and whose theology, synthetically contained in ecclesiology understood as *communio*, Eucharistic ecclesiology², renewed the vision of the Church as a pilgrim community of faith. According to the current Successor of St. Peter, Pope Francis, the path that God expects from the modern Church, which is about to find itself in the third millennium, is the path of synodality³. Francis presented this programmatic proposal on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of Bishops by St. Paul VI⁴. The synodality of the Church is one of the main topics discussed in the contemporary theological discourse. It is therefore worth looking at how the Church understands the very idea of synodality, what is contained in the word "synod" and what would be the role of individual believers, including lay people, in implementing the invitation to follow the synodal path. The Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Church has recently manifested its presence on this road through the event of the Second Diocesan Synod. It was an opportunity to reflect the synodal ecclesial experience in the life of a specific community at a very specific time, which will be indicated by tracing the background to the convocation of the synod and its course.

1. Synodality in the Bible and Church Tradition

¹ Zbigniew Chromy, "Synodalność w świetle eklezjologii Josepha Ratzingera", in: *Synod Pięćdziesiątnicy Kościoła*, ed. Andrzej Jarosiewicz (Wrocław: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny, 2009), 145.

² Joseph Ratzinger, "Eklezjologia Konstytucji «Lumen gentium»", in: Joseph Ratzinger, *Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2005), 116.

³ Pope Francis, "Synodality, a constitutive dimension of the Church. October 7, 2015 – Speech by Pope Francis during the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of Bishops", *L'Osservatore Romano* 11 (2015): 4.

⁴ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Teologicznego Księży Misjonarzy, 2021), no 1.

The word "synod" is an ancient word in the Church's Tradition that evokes the deepest content of God's revelation. In its etymology, it refers to walking together on the path⁵. Being rooted in Sacred Scripture, in the context of the Community of the People of God, it means a common path to salvation⁶. In Greek, this word describes the disciples of Jesus and is synonymous with the Church as a community of *communio*⁷. Translated by Christian antiquity into Latin *synodus* or *concilium* (council), it defined church assemblies at various levels: diocesan, regional, patriarchal and universal. These were occasions to discern doctrinal, pastoral, liturgical or canonical issues by listening to the word of God and the Holy Spirit. The accent of the Roman administration given by the Latin *concilium* (council) is not identical with *synodus* from the beginning, but it is nevertheless convergent and complementary. It refers to secular assemblies convened by authorized authority, but in its provenance it refers to the Hebrew term for an assembly convened by God, constituting the chosen nation of the Old Covenant – *קָהָל* (*qahal*; Greek *ἐκκλησία-ekklesia*)⁸. Both terms have been used interchangeably in church language, and only modern times have decisively distinguished "synod" from "council", introducing in 1983 into the *Code of Canon Law* for the Latin Church a division into the Synod of Bishops⁹, plenary synod¹⁰, provincial¹¹, particular¹² or diocesan synod¹³ and an ecumenical council¹⁴. However, long before the foundation of the Church, already in the stories contained in the pages of the Old Testament, one can find the will to save man not alone, but in a specific community, and thus the seeds of the synodal, that is, the communal life of the Church are discovered¹⁵.

From the very beginning of the creation of the world, including man, God made him a social being called to cooperate with Him¹⁶. However, the sin of the first parents disturbed the order of creation, breaking the relationship of the first parents with each other and with the Creator. Man's freedom was abused and imperfect, yet God did not abandon man and made

⁵ International Theological Commission, *Synodality...*, no. 3.

⁶ Andrzej Dobrzyński, "Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielnego" (Tarnów: Wydawnictwo Diecezji Tarnowskiej „Biblos”, 2020), 29.

⁷ Pope Francis, "Synodality, a constitutive dimension of the Church". October 7, 2015 – Speech by Pope Francis during the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of Bishops, 5.

⁸ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Teologicznego Księży Misjonarzy, 2021), no. 9.

⁹ CCL, can. 432.

¹⁰ CCL, can. 439.

¹¹ CCL, can. 440.

¹² CCL, can. 443.

¹³ CCL, can. 460.

¹⁴ CCL, can. 337.

¹⁵ Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*", in: Second Vatican Council, *Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 4 (hereinafter LG).

¹⁶ Gen 1,26–28.

efforts to bring wasteful human nature back to paradise¹⁷. The idea of election dates back to the figure of Abraham, who is to become the father of the people called by God.

The covenant with the chosen people was sealed with the help of the previously appointed Moses, under whose leadership God led them out of slavery in Egypt and led the freedmen to the foot of Mount Sinai, a place chosen by God¹⁸. It should be noted that the responsibility for the fate of the chosen nation did not rest solely on the shoulders of Moses, but was spread over a college of 70 elders who were judges of their countrymen and administrators of groups of people entrusted to them¹⁹. Over time, local tribunals, courts of minor and greater rank were established, and a diverse priesthood developed, up to the institution of the Sanhedrin²⁰ and later the Synagogue²¹, after the destruction of the Temple and the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The entire historical heritage of the People of God fell to the nascent Church, which became the nucleus of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth²². He came as the promised Messiah to re-gather the Chosen People and fulfill the divine plan of man's salvation²³. The people gathered by Christ create the Church as a hierarchical community with its structure based on the foundation of the twelve apostles headed by St. Peter²⁴. In the beginnings of the Church, the apostles formed one College, which continues uninterrupted in the Church in the form of mutual union of the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of St. Peter, together with the successors of the apostles, that is, the bishops²⁵. Pentecost was a consolidating event in the history of the nascent Church. It is the sending of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus, who, being present in all believers, leads them to bear witness to the works of God²⁶, and in the hierarchical ministry of the apostles, shows the power and authority that come from God Himself²⁷. Already in apostolic times, the Church manifests a synodal way of thinking through the event of the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem. In it, the community of the Church, at a decisive moment in its development, lives its vocation in the perspective of its

¹⁷ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 12.

¹⁸ Dobrzyński, *Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielonego*, 30.

¹⁹ Ex. 18,13–27.

²⁰ Roman Zajac, "Sanhedryn", in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, v. 17 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2012), col. 1047–1049.

²¹ Waldemar Chrostowski, "Synagoga", in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 18 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2013), col. 1323.

²² International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 15.

²³ Dobrzyński, "Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielonego", 30.

²⁴ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 18.

²⁵ LG, no. 22.

²⁶ Yves Congar, "Wierzę w Ducha Świętego", v. 1 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów, 1995), 86.

²⁷ Andrzej Napiórkowski, "Bosko-ludzka wspólnota. Podstawy katolickiej eklezjologii integralnej" (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2010), 99.

mission, enlightened by the presence of the Risen Lord. This event became a kind of paradigm for synods celebrated by the Church²⁸.

In interpreting this event, because of the complexity of Luke's text, as noted by Joseph Ratzinger, it is necessary to adopt a retrospective perspective, which has already gone back to the conciliar practice and which will reconnect the past with the present in order to show properly the apostolic foundations of synodality²⁹. The description of the second account contained in the Letter to the Galatians by St. Paul³⁰, which sheds a different light on the Council of Jerusalem. The everyday life of the Church's mission gave rise to a specific question about the necessity of observing the Law of Moses, which the Antiochian community addressed to the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem Church. In the course of events, Barnabas and Paul, in order to outline the problem personally, came to Jerusalem and participated in an open dispute. The concilium ends with the speech of Peter, openly professing faith, and James, interpreting in the light of prophecy the universality of God's salvific will. As the account of Acts indicated, the apostles and elders were consulted along with the whole Church³¹, and the decision was made by James, who was in charge of the church in Jerusalem, to be further adopted by the present assembly and the church in Antioch³². The above event in the concept of the Acts of the Apostles is a kind of caesura through which the figure of St. Peter and the College of the Apostles give way to the missionary work undertaken by St. Paul and his companions³³.

The synodal process undertaken in Jerusalem in 51 AD highlighted five elements worth noting, i.e.: bearing witness to faith, interpreting events in the light of the Scriptures, understanding differences of opinion as an opportunity to strengthen the unity of the community, awareness of the Holy Spirit's assistance, and the reception of resolutions by the community as serving the Church³⁴. In this process, the way of the People of God was presented as an orderly reality in which everyone has their place and fulfills a specific role. By virtue of baptism, all enjoy equal dignity and all should contribute to the plan of salvation³⁵. The events present in the life of the early Church showed the role of the apostles

²⁸ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 20.

²⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, "Teologia soboru", in: Joseph Ratzinger, *O nauczaniu II Soboru Watykańskiego*, p. 1, *Opera omnia*, vol. 7/1, ed. Krzysztof Gózdź, Marzena Górecka (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2016), 95.

³⁰ Ga 1,18–2,10.

³¹ Acts 15,22.

³² International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 20-21.

³³ Dobrzyński, "Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielonego", 63, Stanisław Nagy, "Synod – czas zamyślenia nad rytmem życia diecezji", in: "Synod Pięćdziesiątnicą Kościoła", ed. Andrzej Jarosiewicz (Wrocław: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny, 2009), 9.

³⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Acts of The Apostles" (Collegeville: MN Liturgical Press, 1992), 271–273.

³⁵ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 22.

as the foundation that authenticates the transmission of faith, being the guarantee of its preaching to future generations. The apostolic deposit of faith was taken over by the successors of the apostles and their assistants thanks to the apostolic succession, which makes each consecrated bishop a shepherd of the local Church and of the whole Church constituting the *communio Ecclesiarum* – synods and councils are a manifestation of this ecclesial communion³⁶. According to Napiórkowski, the apostolicity is expressed in mutual relations between the Holy Scripture, the Church's Tradition and the episcopal office³⁷. After the establishment of the biblical canon and the list of texts recognized as inspired, the carrier of the *regula fidei* (content, rule of faith) was the oral transmission based on the Scriptures, which no less became the normative and binding teaching³⁸.

From the second century onward, as evidenced by the theology of Ignatius of Antioch, the local churches saw themselves as embodying the universal church. It was also a time when the ecclesial communion emerging at Christ's altar under the leadership of the bishop appreciated all the members of the community in their various tasks³⁹. Cyprian of Carthage in the middle of the 3rd century gives a principle that must guide the life of the Church – in the local Church nothing should be done without a bishop (*nihil sine episcopo*), nothing should be done without a synod (priests and deacons – *nihil sine consilio vestro*) or without the consent of the people (*et sine consensu plebis*)⁴⁰. Already from the fourth century, the emerging ecclesiastical provinces showed communion between the local Churches, however, recognizing the primacy of the Roman Church⁴¹. The developing ecclesiastical structures were accompanied by a synodal movement, which was expressed in periodic synods held at the diocesan and provincial levels. From the very beginning, the local Churches were convinced that the decisions they made were an expression of communion with all the Churches⁴².

A specific breakthrough was the Edict of Milan recorded by the emperors Constantine the Great and Licinius in 313, guaranteeing citizens freedom of religion, which contributed to the Christians leaving the catacombs and allowed them to publicly perform religious ceremonies. At that time, synodal assemblies, apart from ecclesiastical significance, also

³⁶ Dobrzyński, "Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielonego", 71.

³⁷ Napiórkowski, "Bosko-ludzka wspólnota. Podstawy katolickiej eklezjologii integralnej", 349.

³⁸ Congar, "Tradycja i tradycje", 60.

³⁹ Ignatius of Antioch, "To the Church in Ephesus", IX, 2, in: Pierwsi świadkowie, ed. Marek Starowieyski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2010), 116.

⁴⁰ Stanisław Sroka, "Nauka św. Cypriana o miłosierdziu chrześcijańskim" (Tarnów, 1939), 86; Cyprian z Kartaginy, "Listy", 14, 4, in: "Listy" (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1969), 512.

⁴¹ International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 26.

⁴² International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 28.

acquired public, legislative and judicial significance⁴³. The emperor's favor for Christianity was so great that in 325 it was on his initiative that the first ecumenical council was convened in Nicaea, gathering bishops from various regions of the East and the West, including the legates of the Roman bishop. The Council's confession of faith and church decisions were considered normative for the entire Church, and the ecclesiastical event itself became the basis for convening subsequent ecumenical councils that would regulate Christian discipline and dogma. In the first millennium, according to apostolic traditions, local synods involved entire communities of the faithful, respecting each of its members, provincial synods of bishops and possibly invited priests and monks, while ecumenical councils involved only bishops⁴⁴.

The second millennium in the history of the Church, which unfortunately began with the Great Schism in 1054, was marked by the separation and disintegration of the unity of Rome and Constantinople. In the East, the practice of regular synods at various levels developed, while in the West the Gregorian reform and the primacy of the pope freed the bishops from imperial supremacy and appreciated the church's authority in the construction of medieval *Christianitas*⁴⁵.

The time of further changes was a response to the Reformation crisis and the convening of the Council of Trent in 1542. The 16th century was a time of many problems for the Church, but also a time of exceptional religious revival. Internal troubles include problems with the residence of the clergy and their education, abuses related to benefices or other abuses related to church authority and offices. Nevertheless, it was also a time of numerous pilgrimages, Eucharistic miracles, a flourishing of brotherhoods and religious foundations, and the emergence of figures who wanted to eradicate evil from the Church and society⁴⁶. By the decree of the Council Fathers, diocesan and provincial synods should be held regularly. However, this was not intended to actively involve the entire People of God in the reforms, but only to transmit and implement the conciliar regulations⁴⁷. In reaction to the Reformers' emphasis on the common priesthood of all the baptized, the shepherds of the Church emphasized the hierarchical structure of the Church with the primary role of the clergy. Another important moment in the history of building a theology of unity and responsibility of

⁴³ Dobrzyński, "Synodalność Kościoła Niepodzielnego", 93.

⁴⁴ International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 30.

⁴⁵ International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 32.

⁴⁶ Arkadiusz Baron, "Sobór Trydencki. Wprowadzenie", in: "Dokumenty soborów powszechnych. Tekst łaciński, polski", vol. 4, ed. Arkadiusz Baron, Henryk Pietras (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2007), 185.

⁴⁷ Council of Trent, "Session 24: II (Decree on Reform, 1)", in Documents of Ecumenical Councils. Latin text, Polish, vol. 4, ed. Arkadiusz Baron, Henryk Pietras (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2007), 737.

all believers was the First Vatican Council (1869–1870). After the riots of the French Revolution, the Italian War, and with the quite clear influence of secular power on the clergy in Western Europe, Pope Pius IX, without prior consultation with the heads of state, decided to rally the Church in order to resist the prevailing spirit of revolution and liberalism⁴⁸. It was then that the assembled bishops together with the pope, preserving the tradition maintained from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion and for the salvation of the Christian nations, established that the dogma revealed by God is: "when the bishop of Rome speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, exercising the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be binding on the whole Church, thanks to the divine protection promised to him in the person of St. Peter, is distinguished by that infallibility with which the divine Savior willed to endow his Church in defining a doctrine of faith or morals⁴⁹. The developed dogma helped to see in the person of the Bishop of Rome a permanent and visible principle and the foundation of unity and community of all particular Churches, and thus of all the faithful.

With the 19th and 20th centuries, there was a return to the sources: Sacred Scripture and Tradition, resulting in the formation of biblical, liturgical and patristic movements. The involvement of theologians, including lay people, allowed for a new look at the dimension of communion, emphasizing the *sensus fidei fidelium* (the sense of faith of all believers) inextricably linked to the ministry of ordained clergy, and treating this sense as a *locus theologicus*⁵⁰. Theologians, examining the Tradition of the Church and returning to the sources, emphasized that the Community of the Church is not identical with its shepherds and that the laity play an active role in the transmission of the apostolic faith, which strongly influenced ecclesiology and the development of laity theology⁵¹. All this was the background to the next council convened by John XXIII in Rome in 1963. The teaching of the Council from the very beginning revived the awareness of the great role of the laity and the common call to holiness of all believers, emphasizing the long-known collegiality⁵². Already in the first

⁴⁸ Klaus Schatz, "Sobory powszechnie. Punkty zwrotne w historii Kościoła" (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2001), 219.

⁴⁹ First Vatican Council, "Session 4: (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, IV)", in: Documents of Ecumenical Councils. Latin text, Polish, vol. 4, ed. Arkadiusz Baron, Henryk Pietras (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2007), 925–927.

⁵⁰ International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 34.

⁵¹ International Theological Commission, Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, no. 41.

⁵² Waldemar Irek, "Synod diecezjalny – uszanowanie kompetencji oraz profesjonalizmu w kształtowaniu oblicza Kościoła lokalnego", in: *Synod Pięćdziesiątnicą Kościoła*, ed. Andrzej Jarosiewicz (Wrocław: Papieski Wydział Teologiczny, 2009), 18.

chapters of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, he teaches that the Spirit awakens and sustains the supernatural sense of faith, which is observed when the whole people, from the bishops down to the last of the lay faithful, manifest universal agreement in matters of faith and morals⁵³. The conciliar teaching became the basis for the editing of the new code of church law, which, taking care of the reception of the conciliar documents, will adequately reflect the role and forms of involvement of the lay faithful in the life of the Church.

In order to revive synodal practice, even before the end of Vatican II, at the universal level, Paul VI established a permanent council composed of Catholic hierarchs, directly under the authority of the Pope – the Synod of Bishops⁵⁴. In the post-synodal exhortation on the bishop, John Paul II stated that this body, constituted by his predecessor, is to express the sense of collegiality and the concern of all bishops, coming from different parts of the Church, for its whole⁵⁵. The topicality of synodality and the willingness to experience it authentically in the community of the Church are also presented by the currently incumbent Pope Francis, having convened another Synod of Bishops in his pontificate. The desire to see the believers of the entire Church led Francis to divide this synod into several phases, starting with the particular one, including parishes, to the universal phase, gathering the conclusions and reflections of the local and continental Churches. In this way, during the synod, the voice will be heard not only of the bishops, but of all the faithful who wish to contribute to the synodal reflection⁵⁶.

2. Theological perspective

The historical outline written above shows synodality as an inseparable element of the development of the Church, which through it reveals itself and creates as an assembly called and guided by God himself. By their synodality, the People of the New Covenant show the way to the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit⁵⁷. Therefore, in the *Pastoral*

⁵³ LG 12.

⁵⁴ Jan Dyduch, "Synodalność jako forma uczestnictwa we władzy kościelnej", *Annales Canonici* 5 (2009): 49.

⁵⁵ John Paul II, "Apostolic Exhortation on the Bishop Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World "Pastores Gregis", in: *Apostolic Exhortations of the Holy Father John Paul II*, vol. 2, ed. Michał Romanek (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2006), no. 58.

⁵⁶ Francis, *Apostolic Constitution on the Synod of Bishops Episcopalis communio*, no. 7, accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pl/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20180915_episcopalis-communio.html.

⁵⁷ Second Vatican Council, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*", in: *Second Vatican Council, Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 6, (hereinafter SC); Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 'Dei Verbum'", in: *Second Vatican Council, Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 2 (hereinafter DV).

Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, one can read that the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* of the People of God are involved in the commitment of communion, and that the vocation of the human person to live in communion translates into a living communion realized through a sincere gift of self in union with God and the other man⁵⁸. Synodality is an expression of the democratization of the Church, but in its structure it is not a democracy, and yet it respects the subjectivity of every Christian⁵⁹. In the synodal nature of the Church, her attributes should also be visible: unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity⁶⁰. On the way to eternity, the community of the People of God, as it walks together – synodally – is shaped and strengthened by the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the life of the Mystical Body of Christ⁶¹. This is evidenced by tradition from antiquity to the present day. Already in the *Ordo ad Synodum*, from the synods of Toledo in the seventh century to the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* published in 1984, the liturgical nature of the synodal assembly is shown, with its beginning and center the celebration of the Eucharist and the enthronement of the Gospel⁶². The Church walks with Christ, through Christ⁶³ and in Christ as his Bride⁶⁴, fully endowed with subjectivity and guaranteeing it to all believers⁶⁵. Thus, the theology that has been developing over the centuries clearly defines synodality as a specific style defining the life and mission of the Church. This implies the need to express in the way of life and work not only the pastors of the Church or a selected part of it, but all the faithful, and this is done by listening to the word of God, celebrating the Eucharist, brotherhood of communion and co-responsibility at various levels and in the implementation of various ministries. Synodality is not only defined by theological reflection, but in a more concrete dimension through ecclesiastical structures and processes regulated by the canons of the code of law. This enables the application of intellectual achievements to the everyday reality of particular and local Churches up to the universal level, which should be fulfilled in synodal events convened in order to discern their path and problems, and to make decisions and indicate directions for fulfilling their evangelizing mission⁶⁶.

⁵⁸ Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*", in: Second Vatican Council, *Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 24 (hereinafter GS).

⁵⁹ Waldemar Irek, *Synod diecezjalny – uszanowanie kompetencji oraz profesjonalizmu w kształtowaniu oblicza Kościoła lokalnego*", 19.

⁶⁰ Międzynarodowa Komisja Teologiczna, "Synodalność w życiu i misji Kościoła", no. 45.

⁶¹ SC 10, 14.

⁶² International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 47.

⁶³ Words of the Major Doxology from the Liturgy of the Holy Mass contained in the Roman Missal.

⁶⁴ Eph, 5,21–33; Acts 21,9–11.

⁶⁵ LG, no. 10.

⁶⁶ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 70

The synodal movement contributes to the activation and integration of the Church. It creates an exchange of charismatic gifts with which the Spirit bestows his Church between the ministry of pastors and the participation and co-responsibility of the laity. Synodality provokes the openness of the Catholic Church to other Churches and ecclesial Communities and helps to build commitment in the social field, reaching out to people of other religions, creating a culture of dialogue and encounter⁶⁷. An equally important element accompanying the synodal path is the formation of the faithful, which will guarantee fidelity to the Church's Tradition in discernment and service.

3. Canonical perspective

"Just as Saint Peter and the other apostles constitute one college by the Lord's institution, so the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, and the bishops, successors of the apostles, are united to one another."⁶⁸ The above dogmatic principle, implying juridical consequences, shows that just as Peter, being a member of the College of the Apostles, presides over it and is its Head, so the Bishop of Rome, being a member of the College of Bishops, is *primus inter pares* (first among equals). Canon 331 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* affirms the authority of the Bishop of Rome, in which the office granted by the Lord St. Peter. In the exercise of this office, help is provided by the bishops who, through the ordination of the episcopate, form the College of Bishops. In this college, the apostolic body continues uninterruptedly – together with its Head (the Bishop of Rome), and never without it - constituting the subject of the highest and full authority over the entire Church⁶⁹.

The most solemn event expressing the collegiality of bishops and the synodality of the Church at the universal level is an ecumenical council⁷⁰. It can only be summoned by the Pope, and only he can move, suspend, dissolve, and approve its decrees⁷¹. While the College of Bishops, together with the Bishop of Rome, exercises power in a council in a solemn manner, "the same power is exercised by the united activity of the bishops scattered throughout the world, which as such was announced or freely accepted by the Roman Pontiff, so that it becomes a true collegial act"⁷². The result of the legislation of the Second Vatican Council, which helps to exercise Peter's authority in a collegial way, is also the Synod of

⁶⁷ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 106

⁶⁸ CCL, can. 330, LG 22.

⁶⁹ CCL, can. 336

⁷⁰ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, no. 97

⁷¹ CCL, can. 338

⁷² CCL, can. 337 par.2.

Bishops. Unlike the council, it is a permanent council, though operating at intervals, assisting the pope in universal and particular matters. It does not interfere with the function of the College of Bishops or other bodies of the central level of the Church. A synod differs from an ecumenical council in its ecclesiastical origin, and not in divine institution, as is the case with a council. And just as the council is the assembly of the whole episcopate, all the bishops, so is the synod only of the assembly of its parts⁷³. The synod is consultative and is intended to present its views on the issues that were the subject of the study. The Synod of Bishops is directly under the authority of the Roman Pontiff, who has the power to convene the Synod whenever he deems it expedient, and to designate the place where the assembly is to be held, to approve the choice of members to be elected in accordance with the provisions of special law, and to designate and appoint other members, to determine matters to be dealt with in due time before the meeting of the synod, in accordance with the provisions of special law, to set the agenda, to preside over the synod, personally or through others, and to close the synod, transfer, suspend and dissolve it⁷⁴. Canon 345 CIC defines different types of synods of bishops. Due to the territorial scope of the importance of the subject matter, the legislator distinguished general synods, which consider matters from around the world, and special synods, dealing with urgent matters concerning a given region and affecting the entire community of the Church. In turn, due to the time and manner of convening, the general synod can be ordinary, i.e. summoned systematically, or extraordinary, convened because of the occurrence of an issue requiring a quick resolution⁷⁵.

Coming down to the particular level of the Church, it should be noted that the universal Church is not the sum of the particular Churches, but is present in them and acts in them. Therefore, each diocese is recognized as part of the People of God⁷⁶, guided by the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Eucharist⁷⁷, and entrusted to the pastoral care of the bishops, who by divine design are the successors of the apostles and are to be teachers, priests of sacred worship and ministers of government⁷⁸. Performing the office of a diocesan shepherd brings with it numerous tasks and areas of commitment, in the face of which the diocesan bishop makes use of various persons and bodies at his service in the exercise of authority in

⁷³ Edward Górecki, "Synod Biskupów", in: "Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego", vol. 2/1, ed. Józef Krukowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2005), 174–175; KPK, can. 342–344.

⁷⁴ CCL, can. 334

⁷⁵ CCL, can. 345

⁷⁶ CCL, can. 369

⁷⁷ Józef Krukowski, "Kościół powszechny a Kościoły partykularne", in: "Kościół partykularny w Kodeksie Jana Pawła II", ed. Józef Krukowski, Mirosław Sitarz (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2004), 29.

⁷⁸ LG 21-23.

the diocese. These include auxiliary bishops and coadjutors⁷⁹, employees of the diocesan curia⁸⁰, general and episcopal vicars⁸¹, an economic⁸² and pastoral council⁸³, and a diocesan synod⁸⁴. One of the postulates of the Second Vatican Council was to revive particular synods as traditional ecclesiastical institutions and diocesan synods as legal bodies of dioceses⁸⁵. This synod is a gathering of selected priests and other faithful of a particular Church who, for the good of the entire diocesan community, provide assistance to the diocesan bishop. It is the diocesan bishop who is the sole legislator and he alone has the power to sign and promulgate synodal declarations and decrees⁸⁶.

In the perspective of the episcopal office, the laity are not only the addressees of pastoral care, but by participating in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ, in their own way they exercise the proper mission in the Church and the world⁸⁷. *The Decree on the apostolate of the laity* makes more concrete proposals and demands that lay people be entrusted with tasks that are more closely related to the office of pastors. These would be, for example, preaching the Christian doctrine, functions in certain liturgical activities or pastoral care. However, because of this mission, the laity are completely subject to the direction of the ecclesiastical authority in carrying out this task⁸⁸. CIC of 1983 by can. 129 §2 allows the laity to cooperate in the exercise of the power of government⁸⁹. In such a case, the legislator demands that the laity who are to receive specific ecclesiastical offices or services undergo appropriate preparation that would allow them to perform the entrusted tasks and offices in

⁷⁹ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the pastoral tasks of bishops in the Church "Christus Dominus", in: Second Vatican Council, Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 25 (hereinafter CD).

⁸⁰ Józef Krukowski, "Kuria diecezjalna", in: "Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego", vol. 2/1, ed. Józef Krukowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2005), 344.

⁸¹ CCL 475, par. 1.

⁸² CCL 475, par. 1-2.

⁸³ Mirosław Sitarz, "Organy kolegialne w Kościele partykularnym", in: "Kościoł partykularny w Kodeksie Jana Pawła II", ed. Józef Krukowski, Mirosław Sitarz (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2004), 144.

⁸⁴ CD 36

⁸⁵ Jan Dyduch, "Synodalność jako forma uczestnictwa we władzy kościelnej", *Annales Canonici* 5 (2009): 53.

⁸⁶ CCL 460

⁸⁷ LG, 31; Jan Paweł II. "Apostolic Exhortation on the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and the world "Christifideles laici", in: Apostolic Exhortations of the Holy Father John Paul II, vol. 2, ed. Michał Romanek (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2006), no 23 (CL).

⁸⁸ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the apostolate of the laity *Apostolicam actuositatem*", in: Second Vatican Council, Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), no. 24 (hereinafter AA).

⁸⁹ CCL, can. 129. "In exercitio eiusdem potestatis, christifideles laici ad normam iuris cooperari possunt"; The use of cooperari possunt raises an interpretation problem and a division among commentators as to whether cooperation can be understood as participation (partem habere). The vast majority of commentators agree that lay people receive these powers, which do not require ordained power. According to this position, lay people have no claim to receive such rights, but this does not negate their ability to receive them; Remigiusz. Sobański, "Power to govern", in: Commentary on the Code of Canon Law, vol. 1, ed. Józef Krukowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2003), 214.

accordance with the provisions of law⁹⁰. The possibility of the participation of the lay faithful in the authority of the diocesan bishop includes, in the first place, those functions or tasks that are of a consultative nature, as in the case of the nomination of a bishop⁹¹ or parish priest⁹², when the canons recommend listening to lay people, in addition to various advisory bodies. The Code also mentions permanent functions related to the pastoral sphere of the diocese. These include the diocesan pastoral council, described above, which should be composed primarily of lay people⁹³, and the institution of the diocesan synod, in which lay people are obliged to participate as its members⁹⁴. And it is precisely the Synod that appears as an institution in the particular Church through which the responsibility of the entire People of God for the particular Church is most visibly manifested, thereby confirming the pastoral value of the synodal assembly⁹⁵.

Also recalling can. 228 §1, it should be recalled that the laity may sit in the created departments and departments of the episcopal curia, appointed permanent or temporary councils and commissions, or perform various judicial functions, i.e.: judge in the collegiate tribunal⁹⁶, auditor⁹⁷, assessor⁹⁸, advocate of justice and defender of the marriage bond⁹⁹, chancellor of the diocesan curia and notary public¹⁰⁰, church lawyer¹⁰¹, diocesan treasurer¹⁰² and translator¹⁰³. A diocesan bishop, faced with a shortage of ordained priests and deacons, may delegate lay people to assist at marriages. It may do so only after obtaining a positive opinion of the Episcopal Conference and the consent of the Holy See¹⁰⁴. Apart from this circumstance, no ordained minister can authorize a lay faithful to perform this function¹⁰⁵. The lay faithful, apart from a case of fortuitous necessity¹⁰⁶, may licitly also perform the function of an extraordinary minister of baptism when the ordinary minister, i.e. a priest, is

⁹⁰ CCL, can. 228.

⁹¹ CCL, can. 377, par. 3.

⁹² CCL, can. 524.

⁹³ CCL, can. 512.

⁹⁴ CCL, can. 463.

⁹⁵ Dyduch, "Synodalność jako forma uczestnictwa we władzy kościelnej", 54.

⁹⁶ CCL, can. 1421.

⁹⁷ CCL, can. 1428.

⁹⁸ CCL, can. 1424.

⁹⁹ CCL, can. 1421.

¹⁰⁰ CCL, can. 483.

¹⁰¹ CCL, can. 1483.

¹⁰² CCL, can. 494.

¹⁰³ Monika Menke, "Udział świeckich w *potestas regiminis* Kościoła katolickiego", "Prawo Kanoniczne" 2, 15 (2013): 109.

¹⁰⁴ CCL, can. 1112.

¹⁰⁵ Józef Krukowski, "Forma zawarcia małżeństwa", in: "Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego", vol. 3/2, ed. Józef Krukowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2011), 315.

¹⁰⁶ Eloy Tejero, "Chrzest", in: "Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego. Komentarz", ed. Piotr Majer (Kraków: Wolters Kluwer Polska, 2011), 664.

absent or is impeded¹⁰⁷. The editors of the instruction *Ecclesiae de mysterio* considered worthy of the highest praise the faith with which many Christians active during the period of persecution and in mission territories took care to administer the sacrament of baptism to new generations in the absence of ordained ministers¹⁰⁸. The non-ordained faithful, in the absence of holy ministers, may also preside over funeral services, subject to the appropriate liturgical regulations. Apart from the aforementioned areas of involvement of the laity at the level of the particular Church, the main area of their involvement and the natural environment of activity is the parish and cooperation with the incumbent parish priest.

The office of pastor is the office of exercising the power to teach, sanctify and govern the flock of God, which shares in the office of the bishop of a diocese¹⁰⁹. The special relationship between the parish priest and the bishop results not only from participation in the same priesthood, but also from the fact that the parish priest is a shepherd in a specific part of the diocese, i.e. the parish¹¹⁰. The parish priest fulfills his tasks in cooperation with other presbyters or deacons and with the lay faithful, which is reflected in the canons of the law code. We are talking here in particular about parish councils: pastoral¹¹¹ and economic¹¹², as well as other areas of everyday parish life, in which the laity should demonstrate their co-responsibility for the Church.

Parallely to the diocesan and parish levels, episcopal conferences are the institutions implementing the ecclesiology of communion. Each Episcopal Conference plays an important role in promoting the synodal path of the People of God by developing effective methodologies for the participation and consultation of the faithful, drawing on various ecclesial experiences in developing pastoral guidelines, and by various activations of synodal processes at the national level¹¹³. For the same reasons, the Church has developed Episcopal Councils at the level of macro-regions, continents and even other territories¹¹⁴.

4. II Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg

¹⁰⁷ CCL 861, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Holy See, "Interdicasterial Instruction on Certain Questions Concerning the Collaboration of the Lay Faithful in the Ministerial Ministry of Ecclesiae de Mysterio Priests", *L'Osservatore Romano* 12 (1998): 39.

¹⁰⁹ Janusz Gręźlikowski, "Posługa proboszcza w parafii", *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 134, 2 (2000): 244.

¹¹⁰ CD, no. 30; LG, no. 28; PO, no. 6; LG, no. 26; SC, no. 42; LG, no. 28.

¹¹¹ CCL 536.

¹¹² CCL 537.

¹¹³ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, 90.

¹¹⁴ CCL 459.

The Church in Koszalin-Kołobrzeg as a particular Church that implements the universal Church is included in the ecclesial synodality. It obliges all diocesans to keep walking together and to read the voice of the Spirit guiding the People of God. In 1972, Pope Paul VI promulgated the bull *Episcoporum Poloniae coetus*, which established a new canonical church organization in the Western and Northern Territories. Among other things, a new diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg was established, inheriting the legacy of the bishopric in Kołobrzeg established in the year 1000. The Pope appointed Bishop Ignacy Jeż as the first diocesan bishop of the new diocese. In the newly created lands, in order to organize diocesan life, the bishop ordered the convening of *the First Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg*, which was reflected in its inauguration on May 10, 1986. After three years of deliberations and drafting resolutions and documents necessary for the functioning of the particular Church, the synod was solemnly concluded on December 9, 1989. In anticipation of the next diocesan synod, the Szczecin-Kamień metropolis inaugurated the metropolitan synod, which is still ongoing. The long-awaited moment came when on March 1, 2015, the diocesan bishop Edward Dajczak sent a pastoral letter to the diocesans, in which he shared his desire to convene a diocesan synod: think together about the path the Church in Koszalin-Kołobrzeg should go now. I am convinced that it will be an event that will revive the faith of our parish communities, and thus bring each and every one of us closer to Jesus¹¹⁵. This appeal became an invitation to pray for this synodal desire and to invoke the Spirit of God to guide the diocese through this synodal process. In his spiritual preparations, the bishop did not forget to entrust the synod to Our Lady of Sorrows, who was awaiting the annual diocesan indulgence pilgrimage in the diocesan sanctuary in Skrzatusz¹¹⁶.

In the first place, the focus was on scientific conferences introducing the subject of synodality, a series of pre-synodal meetings in each of the deaneries and the start of numerous retreats preparing the faithful intellectually and spiritually to embark on the synodal journey. On June 5, 2016, the pastoral letter of the diocesan bishop Edward Dajczak was read in all churches and chapels, inviting him to a pilgrimage to Kołobrzeg on June 10 – 11, 2016, with the announcement of convening a diocesan synod. A historic moment was the signing by Bishop Edward Dajczak on June 11 of *the Decree to convene the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg* and *the Decree to establish the Preparatory Commission of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg* during the diocesan celebrations of

¹¹⁵ Edward Dajczak, "List pasterski biskupa diecezjalnego Edwarda Dajczaka na Wielki Post 2015 roku", 1.03.2015, "Koszalińsko-Kołobrzegskie Wiadomości Diecezjalne" (dalej KKWD) 43, 1 (2015): 25.

¹¹⁶ Edward Dajczak, "List pasterski biskupa diecezjalnego Edwarda Dajczaka przed pielgrzymką do Sanktuarium Matki Bożej Bolesnej w Skrzatuszu", 13.09.2015, KKWD 43, 3 (2015): 35–38.

the 1050th anniversary of the baptism of Poland in the co-cathedral basilica in Kołobrzeg. The shepherd of the diocese wrote: "Following the indications of the Teaching Office of the Church, experiencing the diocesan jubilee celebrations (...) at the baptismal springs of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg, in accordance with the provisions of the *Code of Canon Law*, I am convening the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg, i.e. a meeting of selected priests and other faithful (...) who, for the good of the entire diocesan community, will help the Diocesan Bishop to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Church today, and to recognize the ways God wants to lead it in the modern world"¹¹⁷.

The consequence of the inauguration was the appointment of the secretary of the synod, who participated in a number of synod meetings in deaneries, and the signing on December 23, 2016 by Bishop Edward Dajczak and the entry into force of *the Regulations of the Second Synod of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese*. On February 25, 2017, a synod was solemnly opened in the Koszalin cathedral and nominations were presented to the newly created synod commissions: the main, theological, legal and thematic commissions (for the laity, for the clergy, for consecrated persons, for God's worship, for pastoral care and New Evangelization, Catechesis, Charity, Media, Administrative, Economic, Historical, Youth¹¹⁸ and Marriages and Families¹¹⁹). On that day, Bishop Edward Dajczak also signed a letter to Pope Francis, informing His Holiness about the beginning of the synodal work and asking for an apostolic blessing for the duration of the synod. On the day of the synod's inauguration, the Preparatory Commission completed its work, and the Main Commission began to play the leading role. Its tasks included supporting the bishop in managing the work of the synod, setting goals and tasks for thematic commissions and ensuring their implementation, analyzing and evaluating draft documents developed by the thematic commissions, and managing the editing of synod statutes¹²⁰. The theological and legal commissions were responsible for supporting this commission, whose task was to ensure theological correctness and compliance with church legislation, as well as specialized support for thematic commissions. The task of the thematic commissions was to identify and analyze specific issues within the scope of the commission's competence, assess the current situation in the light of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, propose solutions in the field of particular

¹¹⁷ Edward Dajczak, "Dekret zwołania II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzskiej", 11.06.2016, KKWD 44, 2 (2016): 52.

¹¹⁸ The Youth Commission was established on December 23, 2017.

¹¹⁹ The Commission for Marriages and Families was established on November 8, 2018.

¹²⁰ Edward Dajczak, "Regulamin II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzskiej", §5, KKWD 44, 4 (2016): 73.

legislation, prepare materials needed for the work of synodal teams, formulate preliminary findings (intended for further consultation) and (for synodal sessions), drafting the parts of the synod statutes commissioned by the main commission, and participating, as far as possible, in formative and promotional activities organized by the synod secretariat¹²¹. The entire synodal process was overseen by the secretariat of the synod, acting in a permanent manner, which was not a collegiate body of the synod¹²². The day after the solemn inauguration, the bishop formulated a pastoral letter in which he asked the dioceses to actively participate in the work started through personal commitment, prayer, sacrifice and participation in parish synodal teams, which the bishop established by order signed on March 1, 2017. According to the Regulations of the Second Synod of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese, such a team was to be established in each parish. The leader of the team was to be the parish priest, and the members were to be primarily: parish delegates to synod meetings, members of parish pastoral and economic councils, catechists (lay and consecrated persons) employed in schools in a given parish on a part-time basis, with maintaining the principle that one catechist may belong to only one parish synodal team, animators of parish catechesis, lectors and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and leaders of Catholic movements, associations and communities existing in the parish. On the other hand, their tasks included: formulating conclusions regarding the organization of religious life in the diocese, reflection on the issues indicated by the synod secretariat at a given stage of synodal work, undertaken from the point of view of the local community's experience and also based on the opinions collected by members of this community, prayer for the diocesan Church and work of the synod and its animation in the parish, promoting the synod in the parish and informing about its work. In justified cases, the main commission could authorize the creation of an inter-parish and extra-parochial synodal team. At the same time, the will of the bishop was to celebrate a votive mass about the Holy Spirit every second Thursday of the month, if liturgical regulations allowed it¹²³.

The above events allowed for the commencement of meetings of synod commissions, synod secretariat and synod teams. The bishop of the diocese was constantly concerned that, together with the working administration of the synod, the whole work was constantly commended in prayer. This is evidenced by e.g. facts of the entrustment of the Second Synod

¹²¹ Dajczak, "Regulamin II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej", §12, 74.

¹²² Dajczak, "Regulamin II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej", §37, 78.

¹²³ Edward Dajczak, "Zarządzenia w sprawie celebrowania Mszy o Duchu Świętym podczas II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej oraz powołania zespołów synodalnych", 1.03.2017, acc. 14.11.2022 <https://www.diecezjakoszalin.pl/2017>.

of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese on March 19, 2018 to St. Joseph at the Shrine of St. Joseph the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Słupsk or on August 14, 2018, St. Maximilian Kolbe in the Church of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Słupsk. Regular meetings of individual bodies were supported by the prayers of all the faithful, so that the undertaken work of the synod would realize the synodality of the Church in each of its members, if only through spiritual commitment. The work of individual commissions, crowned with the drawn up documents of findings, caused the synod to enter the next phase. On September 23, 2019, Bishop Edward Dajczak signed *the Order on the convening of synodal sessions and the election of members of the Second Synod of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese*. By the decision of the diocesan bishop, in accordance with the regulations, the participants of the synodal sessions were: auxiliary bishops, vicars general, bishops and the court vicar, collective canons of the Koszalin cathedral chapter, members of the priestly council and diocesan pastoral council, rector of the diocesan Major Seminary, deans, members of the main commission, representatives of priests and their deputies, representatives of retired priests, representatives of the lay faithful, representatives of superiors of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life having a house in the diocese, chairmen and secretaries of commissions, and other persons summoned by the bishop¹²⁴. Their appointment took place on December 23, 2019 by signing the decree of the diocesan bishop. By virtue of the bishop's orders, 10 synodal sessions were convened for the years 2020 – 2022, during which preparatory drafts of thematic commissions were undertaken and adopted. The last session took place on March 26, 2022¹²⁵. After the commission's work was completed, the first of three meetings of the editorial team of *the Statutes of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg* was convened for April 1, 2022. As a consequence, on September 2, the 27th meeting of the main commission was held, during which the texts of the synodal resolutions prepared by the editorial team were presented and discussed. At this meeting, the subject of the last meeting of parish synodal teams was also established, which, having met at the turn of September and October, finished their work and were dissolved, and members were invited to join the Parish Pastoral Council – existing or newly established. The culmination of the synodal effort was the signing by Bishop Edward Dajczak of *the Decree of approval and promulgation of the Resolutions of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg* and on October 15,

¹²⁴ Edward Dajczak, "Zarządzenia w sprawie zwołania sesji synodalnych oraz wyborów członków II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej", 23.09.2019, KKWD 47, 3 (2019): 78–79.

¹²⁵ Dajczak, "Zarządzenie w sprawie zwołania sesji synodalnych oraz wyborów członków II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej", 78–79; Edward Dajczak, "Zarządzenie w sprawie zwołania sesji II Synodu Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeszkiej", 9.11.2020, KKWD 48, 4 (2020): 83.

2022, the solemn closing of the synod in the Koszalin cathedral and the Higher Theological Seminary in Koszalin, which was part of the celebration of the golden jubilee of erecting the diocese.

Conclusion

The course of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg at every stage expressed the understanding of the Church as a community of faith walking together. The authentic experience of synodality noticed not only the clerical state and did not focus on it, but also appreciated the lay faithful, who enjoy the same dignity in the perspective of faith and relationship to God. The course of the synod in its bottom-up form – from the parish and its members to plenary sessions at the diocesan level – showed the great importance of the voice of all members of the Church, who, invited by their pastors, could listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and read the signs of God's Providence. In the celebration of this synodal event, all the elements defining the Church were revealed, i.e. unity, holiness, universality and apostolicity. Before the structures of the synod were established, the prayer surrounding the whole work was already flowing from the hearts of the faithful, and the pastors, apart from celebrating the Eucharistic celebrations, took care of the proper formation of the faithful and their proper participation in the synod. The community of the Church in Koszalin-Kołobrzeg did not suddenly begin to live synodality, but the transition of the diocese to the "state of synod" revealed that it had always lived it, and the word "synod" and the entire content that this word carries could resound with full force.

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