

Prague a city of meeting of lay representatives of European countries

The European Forum of National Lay Committees (ELF) held its Presidents Council Meeting last week in Prague in the beautiful Strahov Premonstratensian Monastery. Representatives of different national lay committees and councils in Europe shared experiences, learned from



each other, led dialogue with each other.

In Prague the presidents talked about their 'Experiences of the Synodal Process so far'. Every attendee presented answers to five questions, prepared in their national forums:

- A. What lessons have you learnt from the Synodal Process?
- B. In what ways have you been transformed by the Synodal Process?
- C. What examples of good practices can you share?
- D. What obstacles were encountered?
- E. What recommendations can you give in terms of concrete steps or actions to facilitate the Roman Catholic Church's synodal conversion at every level?

Mons. Tomáš Halík was not in Prague at the time of the meeting but in a video speech he gave a lecture "The Synodal Way, what it is and what ELF's role is". His thoughts were very inspirational and placed the different experiences in a clear framework. In the near future more information about the content of the talks and the lecture can be found on the ELF website: www.europ-forum.org

Other agenda topics were the preparation of the ELF Statutory and Study Assembly 13th -16th June 2024 in Lugano, Switzerland. It was an initial exploration of a possible theme, suggestions for guest speakers and discussion of program.

Further thoughts were given to ELF's profile and public relations, including discussion on extension, relationships with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, COMECE, CCEE and other European lay organizations.

How ELF can support work of National Lay Committees has been discussed and how it can have exchanges with churches and organizations of other traditions and ecumenical movements and those of other religions.

Also a future project on the ELF and its members has been discussed. It should help the laity both on the European as well as on the national levels to be a better servant of the church and society.

After digital meetings, it was good to see each other again live and with the help of the Holy Spirit to encourage each other, to get to know each other better and more deeply understand the working of the Church in each country.

Info on ELF

The Forum was founded in 1965 encouraged by statements of the Second Vatican Council based on the concept of the laity in the Church. Basic condition for becoming a member of the ELF is that the national body representing laity in the country must be recognised by its Bishops' conference.

By collaboration and exchange between its members, ELF contributes to raising awareness about the mission of the Church in the world and its pastoral work. ELF provides experiences of synodality in the life of Church and explores pastoral and socio-political topics. Besides the aim of strengthening the European consciousness about the role of lay people in the Church, ELF also wants to contribute to the collaboration between lay people, priests and bishops in the Catholic Church and their mutual support.

Josian Caproens
President ELF