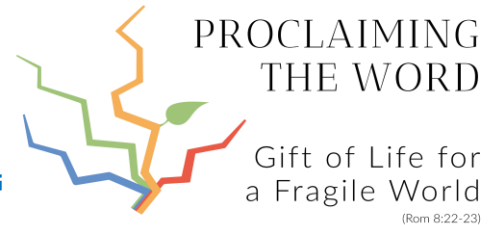


# DOCUMENTS

*Catholic Biblical Federation  
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## **La fragilidad de la Iglesia**

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**The General Secretary of CELAM**

### **Note:**

*The text below summarizes Mons. Lozano's presentation, which was delivered in Spanish during the CBF Plenary Assembly on April 17, 2023. This text is the interpretation and adaptation of the speaker's presentation prepared by Fr. Marek Vanus, SVD, who takes responsibility for the statements included therein.*

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For the correct understanding of the theme, it is necessary first to define the terms used. We interpret "fragile" to imply that which is prone to breaking or falling apart easily. The concept is also associated with "weakness": exhaustion, feebleness, or lacking strength or energy. Consequently, when we discuss "fragility," we frequently associate it with a lack of vitality and permanency.

When discussing the fragility of the Church, we must be conscious that we use human analogy and apply it to the "subject," which is the community. It is not about discussing the limitations of individuals, but rather about focusing on Church structures and modes of functioning.

There are three primary sources for the discussion of fragility in the context of our Church. First, the document "Asamblea Eclesial" (A) [Hacia una Iglesia sinodal en salida a las periferias], the final work of the ecclesiastical assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, the report from the continental phase of the Synod on Synodality. Finally, the Scripture itself.

There are four critical areas of vulnerability and fragility in the Church in Latin America and the Caribbeans. Three are related to and reflected in the synodal process (communion, participation, and mission), and the fourth is concerned with the Church's hierarchy and its functionality.

Communion is a fundamental aspect of the Church, but it has challenges. Among these challenges are clericalism, which is often mentioned in Church documents and affects not only ordained ministers but the entire Church, and authoritarianism, which is linked to clericalism. Additionally, there is a lack of dialogue with reality, particularly concerning different situations facing families. Fundamentalisms and ideologies also present obstacles to achieving true communion, as do divisions and internal battles. Finally, the centrality of the Word of God must not be overlooked in catechesis, and the itinerary of Christian initiation must be considered to facilitate an encounter with the living Christ and

biblical pastoral animation. Addressing these challenges is essential for creating and maintaining a community grounded in true communion.

Participation is a critical element of any community; the Catholic Church is no exception. There are several challenges that the Church faces when it comes to participation. Firstly, some view their faith as personal and live without the Bible, doctrine, and community. Additionally, there is a need to open up spaces for lay and consecrated women, which is related to the issue of clericalism. Another challenge is that the evangelizing identity of the Church and communities focuses more on solving their problems than on reaching out, on the mission itself. Furthermore, there is a tendency to speak to particular groups, like the youth, without allowing them to talk. This signifies weakness in not allowing the Church to become agitated by the questions posed to us and abandoning false security. A significant challenge that needs to be addressed is the difficulty in identifying diversity as our own. We affirm all Christians' shared dignity but do not put it into practice. There is a need to "receive the life as it comes" to use the words of Pope Francis.

The mission of the Church and its main objective should be to address the break in faith transmission within families, where some young people have never heard of Jesus or know him only as a historical figure. There has been an increase in the number of people who do not practice any religion, and there have been fewer baptisms. Young people are entering the digital age, but the Church is not. There isn't much "going out" and mission. The Church is moving away from the cries and sighs of the lands and peoples and the vulnerabilities of those on the margins. The Church should be a "refuge for the broken and wounded."

Finally, multiple issues are associated with the hierarchy and clergy of the Church and its functionality, quality, and effectiveness. One of the primary concerns pertains to the formation of seminaries and religious houses, as they require reformation, particularly in those areas where the "Trident" has not been adequately addressed. Additionally, it is crucial to determine which ministries are genuinely necessary for the current situation. Another area of concern involves the presbyteral ordination of permanent deacons, particularly within the context of Amazonia, along with the inclusion of married priests. Furthermore, numerous cases of abuse occur within the Church, specifically concerning conscience, power, and sexual misconduct. There is also a prevalent lack of economic transparency within the Church, which requires attention. Finally, it is essential to address the need for a significant shift concerning mentality, specifically regarding conversion.