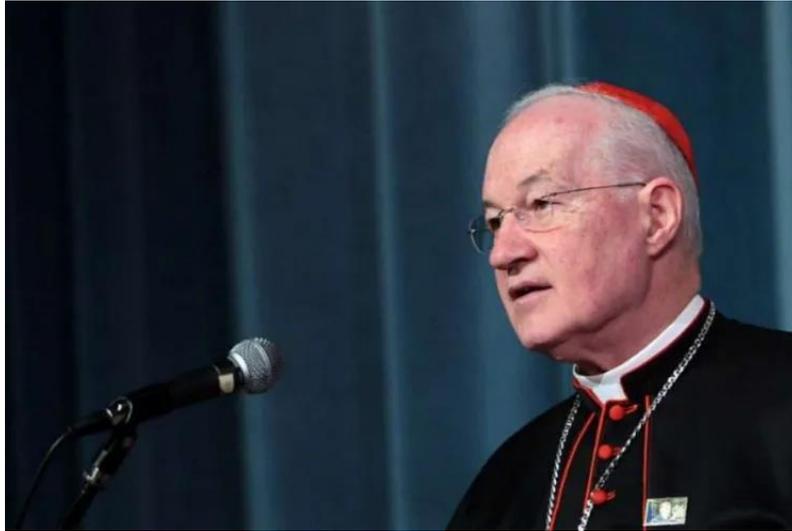


## **Vatican summit on ‘theology of the priesthood’ will look at questions raised in recent synods**



Cardinal Marc Ouellet announced Monday that the Vatican will host a theological symposium on the priesthood that will touch on questions raised in recent synods, including priestly celibacy, dwindling vocations, and the role of women in the Church.

“Insight from Divine Revelation on the priesthood of Christ and the participation of the Church in this priesthood is a crucial question for our time,” Cardinal Ouellet said at a Vatican press conference on April 12.

“During the synods on the family, on young people, and on the Church in Amazonia, questions regarding the priesthood and synodality were raised in all their magnitude, with an insistence on the reality of baptism, the basis of all vocations,” the cardinal said.

“The time has come to prolong the reflection and to promote a vocational movement facilitating the sharing of the various Church experiences all over the planet.”

The international theological symposium organized by the Congregation for Bishops will take place February 17-19, 2022 at the Vatican.

Cardinal Ouellet, the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, said that the symposium, entitled “Toward a Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood,” will be open to all, but is especially intended for bishops and those interested in the theology of the priesthood.

“Given the scope of this symposium, we hope it will mark a stage in the research of the Church and encourage new initiatives and publications,” Ouellet said.

In his presentation of the 2022 theological summit on the priesthood, the cardinal said that the symposium will serve to clarify “a fundamental relationship between the priesthood of the baptized, which the Second Vatican Council has enhanced, and the priesthood of ministers, bishops and priests, which the Catholic Church has always affirmed and specified.”

“This rapport is not to be taken for granted in our time, because it entails pastoral readjustments, and it involves ecumenical questions not to be ignored, as well as the cultural movements that question the place of women in the Church,” he added.

When asked at the Vatican press conference whether the symposium will return to the debates from the 2019 Synod of Bishops on the Pan-Amazon Region on the ordination of mature, married men, sometimes called “viri probati,” Ouellet responded that priestly celibacy will not be the main focus of the summit, but said that the topic will be addressed.

“We are very aware that the celibacy issue is important and it will be dealt with, but it will not be the central issue of the symposium,” Ouellet said.

“It is not a symposium on priestly celibacy, as if this question had to be fundamentally taken up again, it is a broader perspective, starting with baptism.”

Ouellet published a book on the uninterrupted tradition of priestly celibacy in the Latin rite in 2019: **Friends of the Bridegroom: For a Renewed Vision of Priestly Celibacy.**

“We are all aware of the scarcity of vocations in many regions, as well as tensions on the ground due to divergent pastoral visions, challenges posed by multiculturalism and migrations, not to mention the ideologies that condition the witness of the baptized and the exercise of the priestly ministry in secularized societies,” Ouellet said at the press conference.

“In this context, how can we live a missionary conversion of all the baptized without a new awareness of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the world through the Risen Christ?”

The cardinal said that the Second Vatican Council put the “priesthood of the baptized back in the foreground,” but that the “synthesis made by the Council has not entered the life of the Church.”

“The symposium will serve to deepen this question. It is not just a question of the way of organization and division of functions, but of the mystery of the Church,” he said in a Catholic News Agency report.