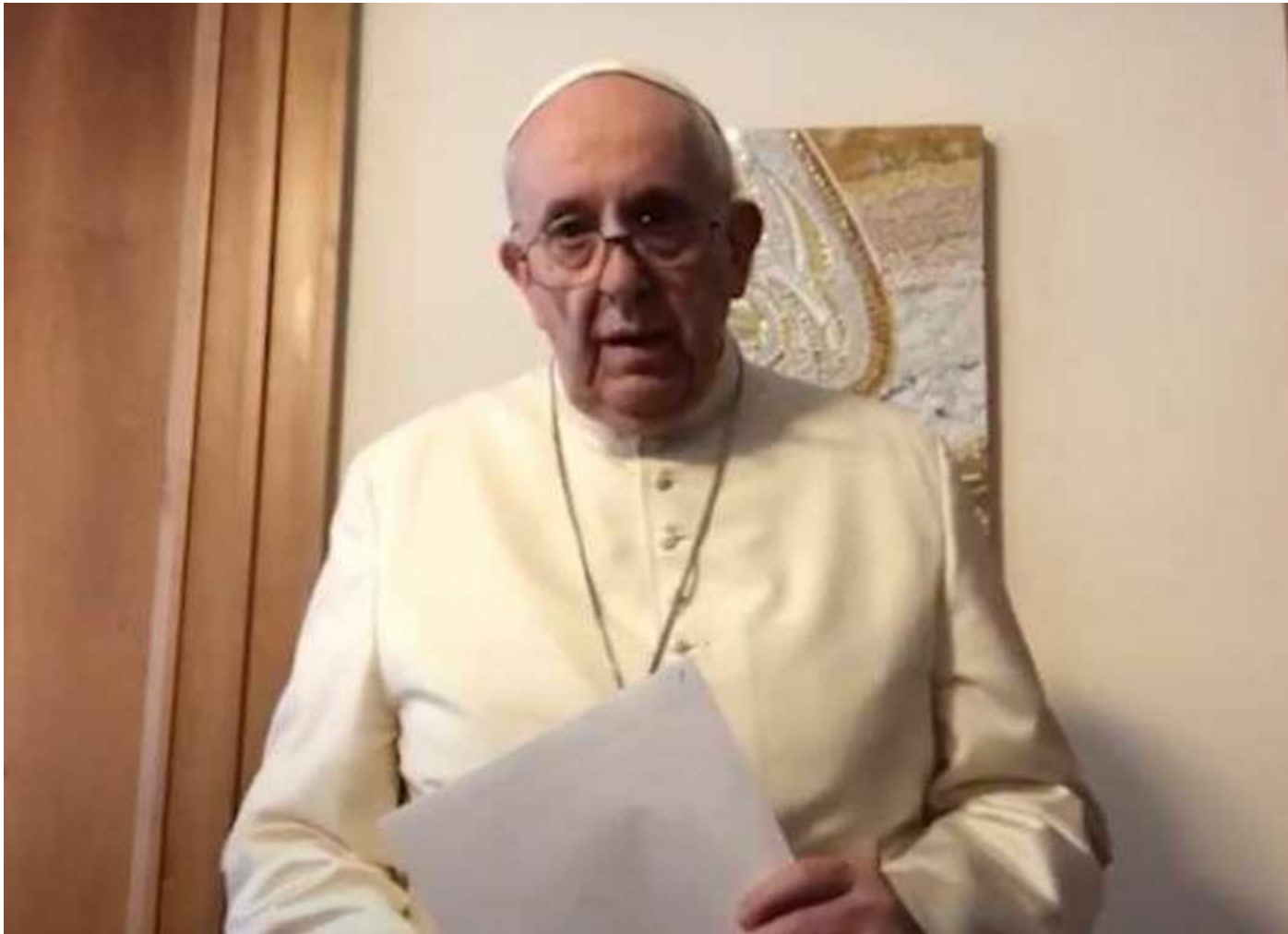




## Pope Francis tells Latin American Ecclesial Assembly not to be elitist



Pope Francis' video message to CELAM sent Jan. 24, 2021. YouTube Screenshot.



By [Courtney Mares](#)

Vatican City, Jan 25, 2021 / 05:30 am MT ([CNA](#)).- Pope Francis sent a video message Sunday to Latin American Church leaders organizing a “synodal” regional assembly, in which he asked them not to be ideological elites, but to remain close to the people of God.

“We have much to learn,” Pope Francis said in the [video](#) sent to the organizers of the first Ecclesial Assembly of the Church in Latin American and the Caribbean Jan. 24.

“This [will be] a meeting of the people of God: lay men and women, religious men and women, priests, bishops. All the people of God walking together: praying, speaking, thinking, discussing, and seeking the will of God,” the pope said.

The regional Ecclesial Assembly is scheduled to take place in Mexico City Nov. 21-28 with the theme: “We are all missionary disciples on the move.”

In his video message, Pope Francis said: “I want to accompany you with my prayers” ahead of the Ecclesial Assembly. He added that this assembly will be something distinctive from the previous regional meeting of the Latin American bishops’ conference (CELAM) in Aparecida, Brazil -- a conference in which he played a role as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

“May this Assembly not be an elite group separated from the holy, faithful people of God,” the pope said. “Together with the people. Do not forget it. We are all part of the people of God.”

“Out of the people of God an elite group crops up, an elite illumined by one ideology or another, but this is not the Church. The Church is found in the breaking of the bread. The Church gives herself to all, without exclusion.”

According to a press release from the Latin American bishops’ conference, the goal of the Ecclesial Assembly is to “contemplate the reality of our peoples and the deepening challenges of the continent” while “reviving pastoral commitment and seeking new paths with a synodal key.”

Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte of Trujillo, Peru and president of the Latin American bishops’ conference took part in the launch of the Ecclesial Assembly, together with the president of the Brazilian bishops’ conference Bishop Walmor Oliveira de Azevedo and Archbishop Rogelio Cabrera López of Monterrey, the president of the Mexican bishops’ conference.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, also participated in the virtual event. The launch culminated with a Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe presided over by the archbishop of Mexico City, Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes.

Pope Francis said that prayer is essential in preparation for this assembly. He added: “The Lord is among us. May the Lord make himself heard.”