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Does benign neglect spell the 'Death of Christians of the East'?

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Prelates leave the opening Mass of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 10. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

ROME -- Sprawl usually marks the opening stages of a Synod of Bishops, as participants use brief speeches to raise a bewildering variety of topics, and common threads can be hard to find. Attempts to identify key ideas too early in the game risk jumping the gun.

That said, yesterday?s first round of speeches in the Oct. 10-24 Synod of Bishops for the Middle East repeatedly seemed to flag a threat facing the churches of the region, less visible than the rise of radical Islam or the war in Iraq, but potentially no less fatal: A sort of ?benign neglect? across the Catholic world, which could mean acquiescence as the spiritual and social capital of the churches of the Middle East ebbs away.

That neglect seemed especially acute when it comes to the six Eastern Catholic churches of the Middle East (Armenian, Chaldean, Coptic, Maronite, Melkite and Syrian) vis-à-vis the dominant Latin tradition within global Catholicism.

Read the full report here: **Does benign neglect spell the 'Death of Christians of the East'?** [1]

Read NCR's full coverage of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East: Index of stories from the Synod [2].

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