

Synod 2021-2023

Fundamental Question and Suggested Questions

The Fundamental Question:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together:" How is this "journeying together" happening today in your particular Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together?"

Possible Question Areas

I. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS

In the Church and in society, we are side by side on the same road. In your local Church, who are the ones "journeying together"?

- ❖ When we say: "our Church," who are the members with whom we share Faith?
- ❖ How is Jesus asking us to journey together?
- ❖ Who are the road companions, including those outside the parish community?
- ❖ What persons or groups do we not consider part of our worshipping community?
- ❖ Who are left out on the margins?
- ❖ What offerings could help us journey together better?

II. LISTENING

Listening is the first step, but it requires having an Open mind and heart, without prejudice.

- ❖ How are the Laity, especially young people and women, listened to?
- ❖ How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?
- ❖ What difficulties and obstacles have you encountered in your parish journey??
- ❖ Do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening?

DEFINITIONS

Synod: a gathering of bishops for consultation or governing in the Catholic church

Synodality: *collegiality*; the action of the Holy spirit in the communion of the body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God

Silence: the absence of noise; in order to listen we need to silence our hearts.

Listen: to pay attention to someone or something being said; attention to fuller meaning and sensitivity to the speaker

Hear: to listen with extra attention

Listening Prayer: listening prayer centers around a clear request for God's guidance; we wait on God in a time of silence, giving the Lord opportunity to speak to us; we focus our time of prayer on intentional, purposeful listening and let God do the speaking

Community: a unified body of people who share common faith and interests

Church: a visible society of the baptized professing the same faith under the visible authority of Christ

Parish: "A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular Church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop" (No. 515).

Parrhesia: Pope Francis draws attention to this word which means to speak with courage and openness

Ministry of Reader: a person chosen or set apart to read sacred Scripture during liturgical celebrations

Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion: the ministry of bringing the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ to the People of God; witnessing to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic meal

Ministry of Catechist: a formal new ministry to be fully developed for lay members of the faith, duly instructed and who lead an outstanding Christian life, who devote themselves to setting forth the teaching of the Gospel and organizing liturgies and works of charity under the direction of a pastor or missionary



II. LISTENING (cont.)

- ❖ How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?
- ❖ What joys did these experiences of journey provide?

III. SPEAKING OUT

All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, integrating freedom, truth, and charity.

- ❖ How do we promote a free and authentic style of communication with the community and its organizations?
- ❖ How do we listen?
- ❖ How do we encourage openness our society to those who are poor or living on the margins?
- ❖ When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
- ❖ How do we use the media system (not only Catholic media) work?
- ❖ Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?
- ❖ How can the Church better listen to all voices?

IV. CELEBRATING

“Journeying together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

- ❖ How do prayer and liturgical celebration inspire and direct our “journeying together”?
- ❖ Do we use prayer and liturgy to direct our most important decisions?
- ❖ How do we promote the active participation of all the Faithful in the liturgy and promote holiness?
- ❖ How do we inspire the faithful to participate in the ministries of reader and acolyte? The new ministry of the Catechist?

V. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION

Synodality is at the service of the Church’s mission, in which all her members are called to participate.

- ❖ Since we are all missionary disciples, how is each Baptized person called to serve in the mission?
- ❖ What kind of change can build up the Church for today’s social and cultural context?
- ❖ How does the community support its members committed to service in society (social and political commitment, in scientific research and teaching, in the promotion of social justice, in the protection of human rights, and in caring for the Common home, etc.)?

- ❖ How do you help them to live out these commitments in a spirit of love and concern for the mission?
- ❖ How is discernment about mission-related choices made, and who participates in it?
- ❖ How are the different traditions of the Church, especially those of other Eastern Rites, adapted, with respect so that we may journey together, in an effective Christian witness?
- ❖ How does collaboration work in parts of the Diocese that have very different ethnic and cultural customs and traditions?
- ❖ How can we discern together these “mission related” choices for the life of the church?

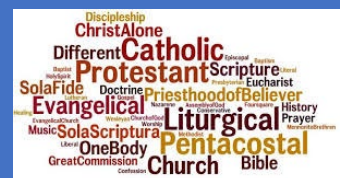
VI. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples.

- ❖ .What are the places and ways of speaking with each other within our parish community?
- ❖ What are the divisions, lack of vision, or conflicts, that make it difficult to share?
- ❖ How do we promote collaboration with neighboring parishes, with and among religious communities in the area, with and among lay associations and ecclesial movements, etc.?
- ❖ What experiences of dialogue and shared commitment do we have with believers of other religions and with non-believers?
- ❖ How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other areas of society: the world of politics, economics, culture, civil society, the poor...?

Authority: the right of a community to direct and guide its members to co-operate toward the good of society; ultimately all authority comes from God

Christian Denomination: a distinct religious body within Christianity identified by traits, such as name, organization, leadership and doctrine



VII. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.

- ❖ What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations?
- ❖ What areas do they concern?
- ❖ What fruits have we drawn from this “journeying together”?
- ❖ What are the difficulties?

VIII. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.

- ❖ How do we identify the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them, and the steps to be taken?
- ❖ How is authority exercised within our parish Church?

- ❖ What are the practices of teamwork and co-responsibility?



Discernment: attentive and loving listening to God so as to discover God's will for us

Decision: to select one out of a number of courses of actions; an act of free will to select one of a number of means

Method: a particular form or procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one

Culture: the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group, a shared sensibility



IX. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.

- ❖ By what procedures and methods do we discern together and make decisions?
- ❖ How can they be improved?
- ❖ How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?
- ❖ How do we articulate the consultative phase in which the people of God express themselves with the deliberative one in which the Bishops, guided by the Holy Spirit, discern a decision?
- ❖ How and with what tools do we promote transparency and accountability?
- ❖ How are we all involved in decision making?

X. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

The spirituality of journeying together is called to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and of the Christian, of the families, and of the communities.

- ❖ What formation does the Church offer for discernment and commitment to our Baptizimal call?
- ❖ How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of "journeying together," listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?
- ❖ What formation do we offer for discernment and the exercise of authority?
- ❖ What tools help us to read the dynamics of the culture in which we are immersed and their impact on our style of Church?