



Synod 2021 – 2023:

For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission

WORKBOOK

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.
Amen.



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

By convening this Synod, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: **It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.**

Following in the wake of the renewal of the Church proposed by the Second Vatican Council, this common journey together is both “a gift and a task.” (Vademecum 1.2)

...the objective of the current Synod is to listen, as the entire People of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church.....the whole Synod Process aims at fostering a lived experience of discernment, participation, and co-responsibility.... (Vademecum 1.3)

Synods are a time to dream and “spend time with the future.” We are encouraged: to express an innovative outlook; to be inclusive; to keep an open mind; to listen to each and every one; to capture an understanding of journeying together; and to value and involve the role and vocation of each member of the Body of Christ. (Vademecum 2.3)

Cardinal Cupich has invited the existing structures for consultation in the Archdiocese of Chicago, namely the Presbyteral Council, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), the Archdiocesan Women’s Committee (AWC), the *Consejo Hispano*, and the Diaconate Council, as well as the established ways we consult with religious communities to be the focus of the process within the archdiocese.

The Secretariat of the Synod is asking each diocese to condense the fruit of their reflections into a maximum of ten pages, supplementing them, if necessary, with other supporting texts. The goal, it insists, “is not to produce documents, but plant dreams, prophecies, and hopes.”

The APC and AWC will initiate the consultation at their meeting scheduled for October 30, 2021. The Presbyteral Council will devote a significant segment of their November 9, 2021 meeting to this task. The meetings of the Consejo and the Diaconate Council are being scheduled.

The following four pages are a workbook for you to write your reflections on the fundamental question and each of the three elements for the Synod. Your reflections will be condensed into our archdiocesan statement. The USCCB will condense all the statements from all the U.S. dioceses to form our national statement. International statements will become the basis for the Synod.

Let the dreaming begin!

Fundamental Question

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.”

How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church?

What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”?

As you respond....

Recall our experiences: What experiences of our local Church does this question call to mind?

Re-read these experiences in greater depth: What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?

Gather the fruits to share: Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for our local Church?

Communion

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road. How are we called to grow as companions? Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, or bold and forthright speaking; that is, in freedom, truth and charity.

Who are those in the margins in our local community? How do we encounter them and listen to their voices? How does what we hear inform how we journey together?

Participation

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Vatican II, 1963) called all the faithful to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations. What has that come to mean in our post-pandemic church? Can we maintain participation without people at Sunday worship?

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

Mission

Sunday worship is the most visible aspect of our religion. The church's mission also includes service, evangelization, healing, and teaching.

Does our faith steer us when making decisions and weighing values?

Does it bring consolation? Does it challenge you to sacrifice?

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation and ongoing learning.

Above all the Church works for justice, peace and respect for all human life.

Synod Reflections

Please forward digital reflections to:

SynodWorkbook@archchicago.org

Please send written reflections to:

Synod Workbook
Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653-1402

Please forward all responses by **February 1, 2022**.

Thank you for sharing.



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Vatican, 24 June 2021

Prot. n. Sp.R. 2633/21

To all members of consecrated life

Dear consecrated men and women,

It is with great joy that we make our own Pope Francis' invitation to set out on an ecclesial journey that begins next October 9 and 10 and will conclude in October 2023 with the celebration of the next Synod of Bishops on the theme "*For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission*". Attached is the infographic of the itinerary for the synod process that describes the entire journey.

This path is presented as already being an experience of synodality because, as Pope Francis reminds us: "A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realizes that listening 'is more than simply hearing'. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of truth' (*Jn 14:17*), in order to know what he 'says to the Churches' (*Rev 2:7*)".

"It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium" because the world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission" (*Address of Pope Francis at the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015*).

These words strongly challenge the prophetic dimension of consecrated life, which finds its source in the *sequela Christi*, in communion with the Church and in the discernment that helps her to seek God's will and to transform it into a life that can awaken the world!

No one should feel excluded from this ecclesial journey. The first phase, characterized by consultation and feedback from the local churches and other ecclesial groups begins in October 2021 and ends in April 2022.

Various methods of participation will be possible, both on a personal and community level: the potential participation of individual consecrated men and women in the existing local church structures, the drafting of a proposal formulated by the individual communities within a specific diocese, national or international input from national conferences of Major Superiors or Conferences of Secular Institutes, Federations, Monastic Associations, other coordinating groups, Continental Conferences, the International Union of Superiors General (UISG e USG) and the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS).

A variety of contributions will also be offered by members of various forms of consecrated life: religious, apostolic and contemplative institutes, secular institutes, members of the *ordo virginum*, hermits, new forms of consecrated life, and societies of apostolic life.

Be open to the challenge offered by the three significant words of the theme of the Synod of Bishops on the Synodal Church: *communion, participation, and mission*. Pray, reflect, discuss and share your experiences, insights and desires. Do it with the freedom of those who place their trust in God and are thus able to overcome timidity, a sense of inferiority or worse still, reproaches and complaints, Let it be done in all simplicity, moved by the Holy Spirit, avoiding arrogance, without presumption but always having a sense of co-responsibility because "All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients" (EG n. 120).

To ensure that the synodal church is not a mirage, but rather a dream to be realized, it is necessary to dream together, to pray together, and to work together.

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Archbishop Secretary



João Braz Card. de Aviz
Prefect