

The Vatican Synod on Synodality 2023

Ten Themes of Lived Synodality

As Christians, we journey together in communion with one another as the People of God. Our mission, as the People of God, is to journey together with the entire human family. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.

The questions accompanying each of the following ten themes can be used as a starting point for reflection. You may choose to reflect on all ten themes or, which may be more manageable, choose five which most speak to you. You may additionally wish to make general reflections on any of the themes.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS 10 March 2022

Online (preferred method)

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Further resources and information

Archdiocesan website: www.liverpoolcatholicresources.com/synod2023

Catholic Bishop's Conference Website: www.cbcew.org.uk/category/synod/synodal-journey/

Vatican synod website: www.synod.va

The fundamental question of the universal Synod 2023

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"?

You may wish to follow this process below in prayerful reflection before looking at the ten themes:

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

Reflect on these experiences in greater depth: What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they revealed? What wounds did they expose? What insights have they elicited?

Notice the presence of the Holy Spirit: Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the Spirit asking of us? What can be affirmed and what needs to be changed, and how could we do this? Where do we find consensus? What opportunities are opening up for our local Church?

PRAYER OF INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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.

TEN THEMES ON “LIVED SYNODALITY”

These questions have been slightly adapted and reformatted to aid discussion. The full text is available on the Vatican website.

1. **COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY** - *In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road.*
 - a. In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”?
 - b. Who are those who seem further apart?
 - c. What groups/individuals are left on the margins?
2. **LISTENING** - *Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.*
 - a. How may God be speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore?
 - b. How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people?
 - c. What enables or prevents our listening?
 - d. How well do we listen to those on the peripheries and on the margins?
3. **SPEAKING OUT** - *All are invited to speak with courage, freedom, truth, and charity.*
 - a. What enables or hinders us to speak out courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and society?
 - b. When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?
 - c. How is our relationship with the local media (not only Catholic media)?
4. **CELEBRATION** - *“Walking together” is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.*
 - a. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and guide our life and mission?
 - b. How do they underpin the most important decisions?
 - c. What opportunities are there for participating in the ministries of lector, acolyte and in the other liturgical ministries?
5. **SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION** - *Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church in which all baptised members are called to participate as missionary disciples.*
 - a. What hinders the baptised from being active in mission?
 - b. What areas of mission and service are we neglecting?
 - c. How does the community support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, family life, education, business, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, pro-life issues, caring for the environment, etc.)?
 - d. How does the Church help these members to live out their Christian values and give witness to their faith in their service to society?
6. **DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**- *Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding.*
 - a. To what extent do diverse people in our community come together for dialogue?
 - b. What issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?
 - c. What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other denominations, other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation?
7. **ECUMENISM** - *The dialogue between Christians of different traditions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.*
 - a. What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian denominations?
 - b. What fruits have we drawn from walking together and what are the difficulties?
 - c. How can we take the next steps in walking with each other?
8. **AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION** - *A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.*
 - a. How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church?
 - b. How is co-responsibility put into practice?
 - c. Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level?
 - d. How can we foster a more synodal approach in participation and leadership?
9. **DISCERNING AND DECIDING** - *In a synodal style we make decisions through discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit in our whole community.*
 - a. Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the wider community?
 - b. How do we promote participation in decision-making, transparency and accountability locally and within hierarchical structures?
 - c. What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put this understanding into practice?
10. **FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY** - *Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning.*
 - a. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” accompanying one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue?
 - b. What support do we need to continue to grow in synodality?
 - c. What formation is needed to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?