

XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Individual Reflection Guide



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”?

Pope Francis is calling the Church to practice synodality, that is listening to – and hearing – one another in all facets of Church life.

The three dimensions of a synodal Church are Communion, Participation and Mission. These three dimensions are profoundly interrelated. There is no hierarchy between them. Rather, each one enriches and orients the other two.

You are invited to participate in the consultation process with the entire Church to reflect on these dimensions of synodality through the Synod questions.

The Synod questions are grouped into ten areas, each conveying a different aspect of lived synodality. Reflecting on these areas may assist you to highlight your experiences and develop a richer contribution to the consultation.

COMMUNION

1. Companions on the journey
2. Listening
3. Speaking out
4. Celebration

PARTICIPATION

1. Authority and participation
2. Discerning and deciding
3. Forming ourselves in synodality

MISSION

1. Sharing responsibility for our common mission
2. Dialogue in church and society
3. Ecumenism

Choose questions from two to three areas to reflect on in one session. You may need several sessions to reflect on the entire list of questions. The complete set of questions is available here:

<https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>

You may need to set aside a minimum of 30 minutes for one reflection session.

PRAY

READ
QUESTIONS

REFLECT

RESPOND AND
PRAY

SUBMIT
RESPONSE

Lectio Divina

The reflection is guided by *Lectio Divina* (Sacred Reading). The process involves slow, reflective reading and praying. You select a question and read it once. Be aware of what grabs your attention. Then you read it again, and then again, reflecting on the words and phrases that capture your heart and noticing the feelings that arise within you. You speak to God about these feelings and insights as you read and pray. Finally, you rest and let God respond and speak to you. Read more about Lectio Divina at <https://catholicidentity.bne.catholic.edu.au/prayer/SitePages/Lectio-Divina.aspx>

STEP 01

PRAY TOGETHER

At the beginning of this reflection, you are invited to pray.

You can use the words written below, read a passage of Scripture or just speak to God from your heart.

Prayer for the Synod: *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*

**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.

STEP 02

READ QUESTIONS

Make sure you are sitting comfortably. Breathe slowly and deeply. Ask God to speak to you through the questions that you are about to read.

Read and reflect on your chosen questions in silence. Reflect on your personal experience of faith, life and the Church related to these questions.

Slowly and thoughtfully, read the questions for the **first** time.

The first reading is an opportunity to get to know the questions. What word or phrase captures your attention and grabs your heart? Linger with it whenever this happens.

STEP 03

REFLECT

Slowly and prayerfully, read the questions for the **second** time.

The second reading focuses further on the points you became aware of during the first reading. Ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you.

Reflect carefully on where God has nudged you. What feelings are arising within you? Sit in silence and then frame a single sentence that expresses what this word or phrase says to you.

Possibly read the questions for the **third** time.

Sit quietly in God's presence, asking, "What are you saying to me?" Rest in God's love, and listen.

STEP 04

RESPOND AND PRAY

It might be helpful to jot down in a journal what arose during this time. Make a note of all the responses to the questions that come to mind. What did you speak to God, and what did God offer you?

As you end your reflection, you are invited to close with an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be or to say a prayer of gratitude in your own words.

You may choose to close with the prayer for the Synod – *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*.

STEP 05

SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE

Your voice is important as it conveys the main fruits of the discernment of the whole People of God across the world.

It is recommended that your response be captured in a short summary of no more than 250 words.

- Pay particular attention to your lived experiences, both positive and negative. Your response should be faithful to whatever emerged from your reflection, rather than a series of generalised or doctrinally correct statements.
- Overall, the response should capture what the Holy Spirit has inspired you to see regarding the current reality of synodality, including the present lights and shadows, and in what ways the Holy Spirit is inviting the community to grow in synodality.

Your response will become your submission to the Synod of Bishops and will be compiled and sent to your diocese. Please submit your response online between 20 October 2021 and 17 December 2021 at <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch> via the **SUBMISSION** link.



Thank you for contributing to the discernment process
of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

*Guided by the Holy Spirit, we make up the living
stones through whom God builds up the Church
that He desires for the third millennium (1 Peter 2:5).*



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