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# Leader's Guide to Synodal Pathway

For clergy, parish representatives  
and those organising the synodal pathway

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Diocese of Westminster



*“The Church of God is  
convoked in Synod.”*

Synod Preparation Document #1, Synod of Bishops Office

## Introduction

Pope Francis has launched a worldwide process of listening and discerning, a ‘synodal pathway’ from October 2021-2023. Synodal means ‘journeying together’. The Pope is inviting 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.

Pope Francis, Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of  
the institution of the Synod of Bishops

The synod process is a time of ‘journeying together’. It is also a time to reflect together on the journey. We will begin by listening to one another, sharing our experience of travelling together in a time of profound change, intensified by the challenge of the pandemic. And we will consider our wider experience of journeying together, as members of the Church and alongside others journeying in the world.

Read more about the vision of the Synod in the ‘Vision for the Synodal Journey’ document.



## Training and Resources

Details of training events (at the end of October 2021) and Synod resources can be found at [www.rcdow.org.uk/synod](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/synod). In addition to this guide, the resources include:

Resources for your community's synodal pathway:

- Vision for the Synodal Journey
- Leader's Guide (this document)
- Prayer Cards
- Journeying Together – Participant's Guide
- Interactive Listening Activities
- Guide to Group Synodal Conversations
- Hosting a simple one-to-one or group listening conversation
- Overall Summary Feedback Report (available in November)

## How to use these Resources

We invite you to use these resources in the way that best suits your parish/community. Here are some suggestions:

- Use the interactive listening activities to create easy ways for the congregation/religious community/organisation to contribute to the Synod process
- Print the prayer cards and Participant Guide for everyone.
- Ask several suitable people to act as listeners and host one-to-one conversations with people both within and beyond the community (Use the Simple Question Framework)
- Host group listening sessions (see the Guide to Group Synodal Conversations)

## Taking part

There will be three types of synodal conversations:

1. Listening Events with Area Bishops
  - 1.1 Area Listening Events
  - 1.2 Listening Events for Young Adults, Ethnic Chaplaincies, Social Justice and Peace Network, and School Leaders
2. Group synodal conversations in the parish
3. Online Listening Events for those who cannot attend locally.

Groups and individuals are encouraged to join in Area, parish, and online conversations. More details at [www.rcdow.org.uk/synod](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/synod)



## Your role

Thank you for agreeing to support the Synodal pathway in your parish or community. The listening process is focused on local dioceses and local Church communities until early 2022. Your role is crucial in helping to ensure that people can join in with varied opportunities to engage, and that people are supported to participate well by listening attentively to others, and by contributing their own experience.

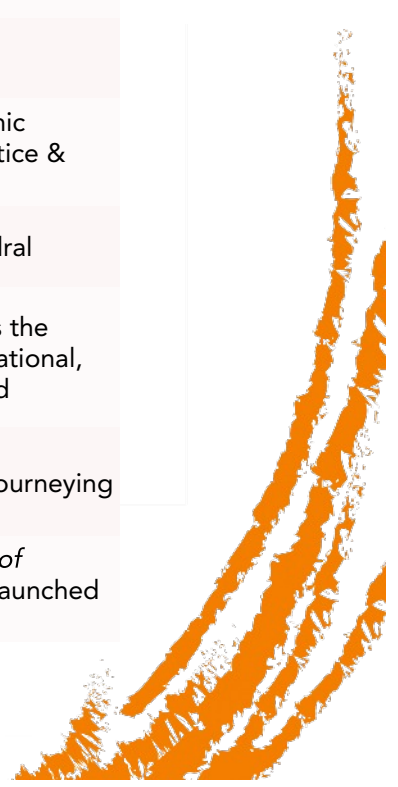
If you can, form a team. Help one another to consider each of your strengths. Do you have everything you need to organise the synodal pathway in your community? If not, who else could you invite to take on a role? For example, you may be a gifted organiser or convener, but are there others in the parish/community who are better placed to facilitate your group synodal conversations? Perhaps a catechist could help, or one of the staff from the school. Invite them to support you and encourage them to attend a training event and to read the preparation resources.

Your role will be to work together to enable people to participate in the synodal pathway. You are also invited to take on a special listening role. This means to listen deeply as the synodal pathway continues so that you can feedback what you have heard to the Synod team in the Diocese. You will, in a sense, need to try to listen to what emerges from the entire listening phase so you can be faithful in how you feedback what has been shared (it may be that you also want to invite someone else to take on this role).

# Overview of Diocesan Synodal Pathway

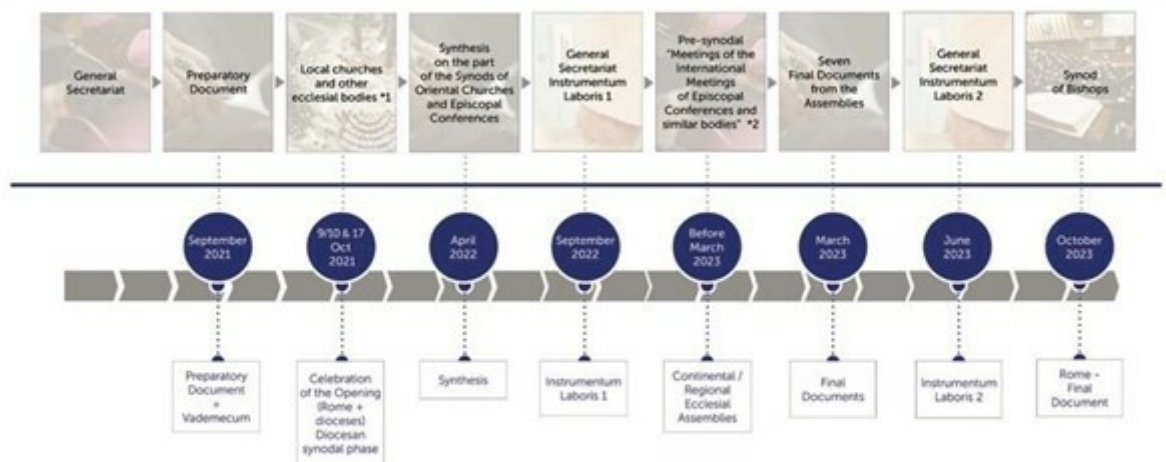
On 16/17 October 2021 the Diocesan Synodal Pathway is launched in the Cathedral and in local parishes. Following this there is a time of preparation and training in parishes and communities (see [www.rcdow.org.uk/synod](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/synod) for resources and training events). The local listening phase follows:

Sunday 31st October – Sunday 5th December	Synodal Pathway events and activities in parishes/communities
15th November 7-9pm, 20th November 10am-12pm, 24th November 7-9pm	Online diocesan listening events: These are primarily offered as events for people who cannot attend listening events in their own parish/community. They will mirror the 'three session' process proposed in the 'Group Synodal Conversation Guide'
Late November/early December	Area Listening Events with the Cardinal and Auxiliary Bishops
Other moments of listening	Themed listening events for young adults, Ethnic Chaplaincies, Headteachers and the Social Justice & Peace Network
17th December	Return of parish/community submissions
Other moments of listening	Themed listening events for young adults, Ethnic Chaplaincies, Headteachers and the Social Justice & Peace Forum.
Saturday 15th January 2022	Pre-Synodal Diocesan Gathering at the Cathedral
15th January to February 2020	The voices of the Synodal Pathway from across the diocese are gathered together to inform the national, continental and worldwide phases of the Synod
Ongoing	Parishes and communities continue to develop pathways of synodality as they develop their 'journeying together'
October 2023	Following the <i>General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops</i> in Rome, an implementation phase is launched across the worldwide Church.



# Overview of Global Synodal Process

## FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS



\*1 Dioceses, Consecrated Life (USG-USG, UNIONS & FEDERATIONS), Associations of the Faithful, Institutions of Higher Education  
\*2 Africa (SECAH), Oceania (FCBO), Asia (FABC), Middle East (ICPCB), Europa (CECE), Latin America (CELAM), North America (USCCB+CCCC)



## Who are we listening to?

It is essential that we listen to as many people as we can, and that no one feels left out or left behind. The Synod will include pathways of listening, which we hope will enable many experiences to be shared, both joyful experiences and those which include pain and discomfort. We're particularly conscious that our listening together seeks to involve those who may experience exclusion or marginalisation in the Church or the world. All those voices are important so that together we can discern what steps the Spirit of God may be inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church – a Church journeying together.

The synodal pathway is a participative and inclusive process that offers everyone—especially those on the 'margins'—the opportunity to express themselves, to be heard and to contribute to how the People of God can better 'journey together'.

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“Special care should be taken to involve those who may risk being excluded: women, those with disabilities, refugees, migrants, the elderly, people who live in poverty, Catholics who rarely or never practise their faith.... while all the baptised are specifically called to take part in the Synodal Process, no one – no matter their religious affiliation – should be excluded from sharing their perspective and experiences, insofar as they want to help the Church on her synodal journey of seeking what is good and true. This is especially true of those who are most vulnerable or marginalised.”

*Vademecum, for the Synod on Synodality, from the Synod of Bishops, Rome.*  
#2.1

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## Questions to consider

When you are considering who to invite to engage, please take time to reflect. The following questions, may help:

- In our parish/community, who are those who “walk together”?
- Who are those who seem further apart?
- What groups or individuals are left on the margins of the parish/community?
- Which voices might be missing, especially women and young people?
- With whom do we journey outside our parish/community? With whom are we called to grow as companions?
- How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalisation, or social exclusion?

## Various pathways

There are various pathways for listening. Each of these can be used to include the voices of both those within our parish/community and those outside:

- Simple interactive activities to enable people to participate
- One-to-one
- Group conversations

## Engaging People in the Synod Pathway

The goal is to ensure the participation of the greatest number possible, in order to listen to the living voice of the entire People of God and those we journey alongside. This will not be possible unless we make special efforts to actively reach out to people where they're at, especially those who are often excluded or who are not involved in the life of the Church. There must be a clear focus on the participation of the poor, marginalised, vulnerable, and excluded, in order to listen to their voices and experiences.



## Engagement Process

The process of the Synod can be supported by taking time to focus on 'engagement'. This section provides some ideas based on a methodology developed over many years, learning from different types of projects. Often parishes/communities invest huge amounts of time and effort in developing initiatives that receive a luke-warm take up, sometimes just involving the handful parishioners who turn up faithfully to everything. The method shared here is designed to help us think about how to engage a broader range of people, raising their awareness of the Synod process and then engaging their interest in a specific opportunity to get involved, which is relevant to them. This leads people to commit to taking action, whether large or small.

The stages to this engagement process are:

1. Raise Awareness
2. Stimulate Interest
3. Create an Opportunity
4. Facilitate Choice
5. Preparation
6. Action

One of the most important things about this process of engagement is accepting that people will engage with projects in different ways and hence there needs to be a variety of ways available to them to get involved. That is why the synod pathways are designed to allow different levels of involvement. For example, someone may hear a homily about listening, pick up a participant's guide or prayer card as they leave Mass and read it on the way home. This might lead to them to consider what they could do to listen to the Holy Spirit in their own lives and then making a written response. Other parishioners may, after having their interest stimulated, decide to stay behind for a few minutes after Mass and participate in one of the activities, or to attend one of the listening events. Over time, this may lead to committing to a more engaged involvement, such as taking part in ongoing groups that might be set up in the parish.

There are many opportunities to engage people. It simply involves us taking the time to go beyond merely making people aware of the Synodal process (although that is the first step). We need to consider how we might get people interested further and, crucially, what the specific opportunities might be that would attract someone to decide to take part. Every opportunity should be made to do this over the weeks leading up to the listening phase. Think big! How can you raise awareness and stimulate interest in the different opportunities?



# Ideas for Raising Awareness

- How can you use the Sunday liturgy to raise people's awareness and stimulate interest in the synodal pathway?
- Consider expanding your newsletter for several weeks before and during the listening phase. It will help promote the synodal process if the newsletter looks different. Anything new helps to grab people's attention and engage people. Use the synod resources – copy and edit the text to suit your needs

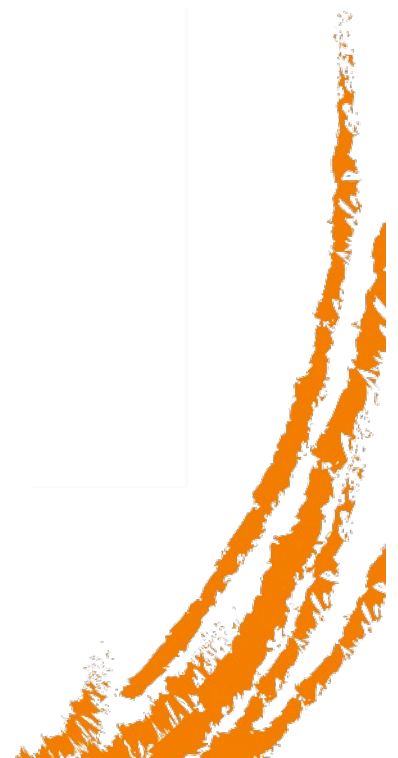
## **Worldwide Synodal Process – The Church is listening!**


Pope Francis has launched a worldwide process of listening and discerning, a 'synodal pathway' from October 2021-2023. Synodal means 'journeying together'. The Pope is inviting the entire Church to reflect on this theme: "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium."

The synodal process is a time of 'journeying together'. It is also a time to reflect together on the journey. We will begin by listening to one another, sharing our experience of travelling together in a time of profound change, intensified by the challenging time of the pandemic. And we will consider our wider experience of journeying together, as members of the Church and alongside others journeying in the world.

It is hoped that every parish in the world will take part. Our parish will participate with a series of listening events in November. Save the dates... *[Insert dates and details of your listening events]*

There will also be opportunities to gather with our Bishops and people from across the diocese in area listening events. All are welcome.



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- Prepare your social media using extracts from the resources.
  - How can you raise awareness using existing parish/community groups and events?
  - What listening events are you hosting? Can you develop a promotion plan for each event?

## Inviting and addressing barriers to engagement

All that is left is to extend the invitation so people can choose to say yes. This also means being aware of the barriers that may mean people feel they can't engage (e.g. transport or child care) and considering how we can support them – can we pool lifts to events or run a crèche?

Nothing replaces the power of a personal invitation. A face-to-face approach such as the following is far more powerful than a notice in the newsletter:



## To a parishioner

"Pope Francis has launched a new initiative... [explain a little about the vision of the Synod]. What do you think? It is important to the parish, and we need people to participate so that we hear from as many as possible and so that we listen to one another. I think you would enjoy it, and I think you would bring a lot to it. Your experience in [e.g. supporting your neighbours in lockdown] would really help. Would you consider coming to one of the listening sessions? .. Great – I'll give you some material to help you prepare. What can I do to help ensure that you can make it? Do you need anything from me?"

## To someone outside the community

"Pope Francis has launched a new initiative... [explain a little about the vision of the Synod emphasising that the Church wants to learn from the experience of others – of all faiths and none]. What do you think? It is important to me and to my community that we hear from a wide range of people. We would really value local people to share their experience with us and help us consider how we, as the Catholic community can be better at journeying with others. We need people to participate so that we hear from as many as possible. I think you would bring a lot to it. Your experience [e.g. from your own faith community / from not feeling welcome / of this local community] would really help. Would you consider having a conversation with me? Or coming to one of the listening sessions? Great – I'll give you some material to help you prepare. What can I do to help ensure that you can make it? Do you need anything from me?"



# Hosting Listening Conversations

## Hosting One-to-one or small informal groups

Invite suitable people in your parish/community to act as 'listeners' and host one-to-one conversations (or small informal groups). Use the 'Listening Deeply' resource in the appendix and the 'Simple Question Framework' to guide you. These simple conversations are an effective way to listen to people who may otherwise be overlooked, both within and beyond the community. 'Listeners' may want to invite different people to have a conversation with them:

- People from within your parish/community who may not participate in the Synod process in another way. It is a good opportunity to hear from them
- Members of your parish/community who no longer participate in the way they used to e.g. no longer come to Sunday Mass.
- Children or family members who appear to be more distant from the parish/community than yourself
- Those who may feel marginalised or excluded from the Church and/or society
- People of other Christian denominations and other faiths
- People of no faith who may be willing to help your parish/community consider how to 'journey together'.

## Hosting group conversations

A detailed guide for hosting group conversations can be found in the resources available at [www.rcdow.org.uk/synod/](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/synod/). There are a range of different pathways suggested with session plans.

Another method for a further conversation for those who wish is offered below:

## Spiritual Conversation – another method of group dialogue

The Spiritual Conversation method promotes active participation, attentive listening, reflective speaking, and spiritual discernment. Simple questions are shared in advance (e.g. see the Participant Guide). Participants form small groups of about 6-7 persons from diverse backgrounds. This method takes about at least an hour and comprises three rounds. In the first round, everyone takes equal turns to share the fruit of his or her prayer, in relation to the reflection questions circulated beforehand. There is no discussion in this round and all participants simply listen deeply to each person and attend to how the Holy Spirit is moving

within oneself, within the person speaking, and in the group as a whole. This is followed by a time of silence to note one's interior movements. In the second round, participants share what struck them most in the first round and what moved them during the time of silence. Some dialogue can also occur, and the same spiritual attentiveness is maintained. Once again this is followed by a time of silence. Finally, in the third round participants reflect on what seems to be resonating in the conversation and what moved them most deeply. New insights and even unresolved questions are also noted. Spontaneous prayers of gratitude can conclude the conversation. Usually each small group will have a facilitator and note-taker. (A detailed description of this process is provided on the Vatican Synod website: [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va))

Once the group dialogue has taken place, participants should review and share about their experience of the process within their small group. How was their experience? What were the ups and downs? What new and refreshing insights might they have discovered? What have they learned about the synodal way of proceeding? How was God present and at work during their time together?

## Supporting your synodal conversations

The synodal pathway is about sharing our experience of journeying together as Church, and discerning steps forward. It is, as Pope Francis says, about how we live and apply our faith today.

“What is under discussion at synodal gatherings are not the traditional truths of Christian doctrine. The Synod is concerned mainly with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time.” (Let us Dream, 84-85)

It is easy to fall into other ways of conversation, which take us away from synodal listening and discerning. In the Appendix you will find two resources to support you:

- 'Listening Deeply'
- Staying Focused on Synodality



## Feedback

We invite you to collate a summary report by 17 December 2021. Please use the template provided on [www.rcdow.org.uk./synod](http://www.rcdow.org.uk./synod) (It will be live in November). Please feel free to also return all the record forms from one-to-one conversations and group conversations.

To prepare yourself to complete the summary, meet with others who journeyed with you to organise the process (or several people who participated) and consider the questions below.

What was the story of your synodal pathway in your community?

- What were the main steps you took?
- What was done to engage as many participants as possible and to reach out to the peripheries?
- Approximately what proportion of people in the community participated in one way or another?
- Were there any groups of people whose participation was especially noteworthy?
- Were there specific groups of people who did not participate for any reason?

What was most significant about the whole experience?

- What were the high points and low points, or the consolations and desolations?
- What dispositions, attitudes, or feelings were notable?
- What was particularly significant, surprising or unexpected?
- Which particular stories or real-life experiences were especially moving and why?
- What tensions or disagreements emerged from the listening process?
- What topics or issues gave rise to diverse points of view?
- Which points of view seem to have strong resonance? Which points of view were mentioned less but are interesting and noteworthy?


Overall, what were the fruits that the Holy Spirit has brought about through this experience?

What new perspectives or new horizons opened up?

In what ways is the Holy Spirit inviting your parish/community to grow in synodality?

What dreams, desires, and aspirations for the Church were expressed by participants?

Based on what was shared, what steps might your community feel called to take in their journeying together?



## Further Support

Please contact [catadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:catadmin@rcdow.org.uk)





## Appendix 1: Listening Deeply

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“I have come here to encourage you to take this synodal process seriously and to tell you that the Holy Spirit needs you. And this is true: the Holy Spirit needs us.

Listen to it by listening to yourself. Don't leave anyone out or behind.”

*Address Of The Holy Father Francis To The Faithful Of The Diocese Of Rome,  
18 September 2021*

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Listening is *the* method of the Synodal pathway. Listening deeply together will support us to discern what the Spirit of God may be saying to us. Discernment is the attitude or stance of people who believe that God is always both present and active in the details of our lives. It relies on the conviction that he will reveal his plans and purposes to us if we make an effort to be attentive. We fully understand discernment only by doing it. It begins with listening.

Everyone in the Synod process will listen. However, if you have a role in hosting a conversation or specifically listening so as to hear the whole conversation and offer feedback, you will benefit from preparing well.

### Active Listening

First, like everyone who is sharing, attend to your ‘active listening’. The goal is to try and understand others as they are. The core question is: “What is happening in the other person and in me, and how is the Lord working here?” Listen not only to what is said but also to what the speaker means and what he or she might be experiencing at a deeper level – thus listening actively.

Active listening means:

- We listen to what is being said, not focussing on what we will say afterwards
- We give full attention and presence to the person. We pay attention to more than one level of expression in the other
- We allow ourselves to be influenced and learn from the other
- We welcome the speaker without judgment – each person is the expert on his or her own life. This requires humility, openness, patience
- We are able to sit comfortably with silence
- We have an awareness that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the other person



## As someone who is hosting a conversation or group

The aim is to create an atmosphere of trust and welcome, so that people can express themselves more freely. This helps them to take seriously what happens within them as they listen to others and speak. Ultimately, this interior attentiveness makes us more aware of the presence and participation of the Holy Spirit in the process of sharing and discernment.

If working with a group you may want to offer these questions, one at a time, slowly for reflection:

- Do you believe that this group is gathered to do God's work?
- Do you believe that we hear the Holy Spirit in others?
- Will you listen deeply to each other and listen for God?
- Will you hear all opinions and value the person giving them- even when you disagree with the opinion?
- Will you see disagreement as opportunity and not as a threat?
- Will you be open and generous?

## Your role:

- Prepare people ahead of time (provide the 'Synod Participant's Guide' and all the details people need to take part)
- SOLER (Sit square on (if one-to-one), Open posture, Lean in, Eye Contact, Relax)
- Open questioning – maintain a conversational style
- Ask for clarification – 'tell me more'. Seek understanding rather than offer judgment – 'I'm curious about that...'
- Reflect back what you have heard ('What I heard you say was...')

After the listening take time for your own reflection:

- What are you learning about the experience of listening in the Church?

"We all know the adage 'It's good to talk'. We know how important communication is for every relationship. But talking must be matched by listening. Indeed, often the listening is more demanding, and really it should come first. So it is with this 'Synodal' invitation. The pathway is listening, the task is discerning together the important lessons and prompting of the Holy Spirit, and the outcome greater participation in the life and mission given to us by the Lord."

*Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Pastoral Letter 3 October 2021*



## Appendix 2: Staying Focus on Synodality

The synodal pathway is about sharing our experience of journeying together as Church, and discerning steps forward. It is, as Pope Francis says, about how we live and apply our faith today.

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“What is under discussion at synodal gatherings are not the traditional truths of Christian doctrine. The Synod is concerned mainly with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time.”

*Let us Dream, 84-85*

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“It is easy to fall into other ways of conversation, which take us away from synodal listening and discerning. The following is offered from the main Vatican preparation manual to help you consider the attitudes which will support good participation in the Synod and ‘pitfalls’ to watch out for.”

*Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, 2.3-2.4*

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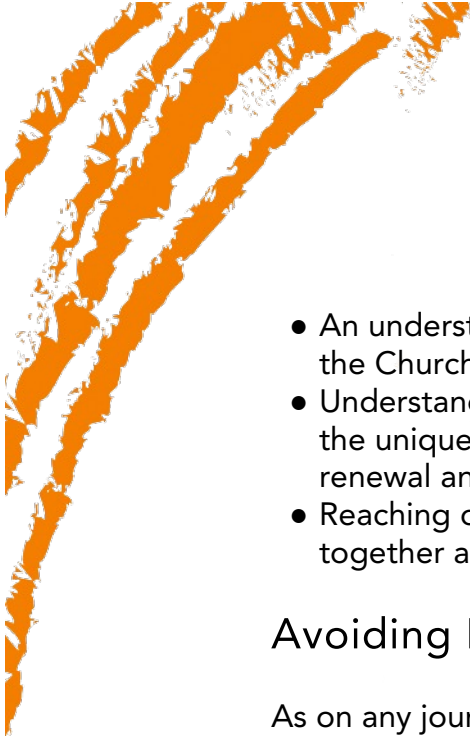
### Attitudes for Participating in the Synodal Process

On various occasions, Pope Francis has shared his vision for what the practice of synodality looks like concretely. The following are particular attitudes that enable genuine listening and dialogue as we participate in the Synodal Process.

- Being synodal requires time for sharing: We are invited to speak with authentic courage and honesty (parrhesia) in order to integrate freedom, truth, and charity. Everyone can grow in understanding through dialogue.
- Humility in listening must correspond to courage in speaking: Everyone has the right to be heard, just as everyone has the right to speak. Synodal dialogue depends on courage both in speaking and in listening. It is not about engaging in a debate to convince others. Rather, it is welcoming what others say as a way by which the Holy Spirit can speak for the good of all (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- Dialogue leads us to newness: We must be willing to change our opinions based on what we have heard from others.
- Openness to conversion and change: We can often be resistant to what the Holy Spirit is trying to inspire us to undertake. We are called to abandon attitudes of complacency and comfort that lead us to make decisions purely on the basis of how things have been done in the past.

- Synods are an ecclesial exercise in discernment: Discernment is based on the conviction that God is at work in the world and we are called to listen to what the Spirit suggests to us.
- We are signs of a Church that listens and journeys: By listening, the Church follows the example of God himself, who listens to the cry of his people. The Synodal Process provides us with the opportunity to open ourselves to listen in an authentic way, without resorting to ready-made answers or pre-formulated judgments.
- Leave behind prejudices and stereotypes: We can be weighed down by our weaknesses and sinfulness. The first step towards listening is freeing our minds and hearts from prejudices and stereotypes that lead us on the wrong path, towards ignorance and division.
- Overcome the scourge of clericalism: The Church is the Body of Christ filled with different charisms in which each member has a unique role to play. We are all interdependent on one another and we all share an equal dignity amidst the holy People of God. In the image of Christ, true power is service. Synodality calls upon pastors to listen attentively to the flock entrusted to their care, just as it calls the laity to freely and honestly express their views. Everyone listens to one other out of love, in a spirit of communion and our common mission. Thus the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in manifold ways in and through the entire People of God.
- Cure the virus of self-sufficiency: We are all in the same boat. Together we form the Body of Christ. Setting aside the mirage of self-sufficiency, we are able to learn from each other, journey together, and be at the service of one another. We can build bridges beyond the walls that sometimes threaten to separate us – age, gender, wealth, ability, education, etc.
- Overcoming ideologies: We must avoid the risk of giving greater importance to ideas than to the reality of the life of faith that people live in a concrete way.
- Give rise to hope: Doing what is right and true does not seek to attract attention or make headlines, but rather aims at being faithful to God and serving His People. We are called to be beacons of hope, not prophets of doom.
- Synods are a time to dream and “spend time with the future”: We are encouraged to create a local process that inspires people, with no one excluded to create a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel. The following dispositions will help participants (cf. *Christus Vivit*):
  - An innovative outlook: To develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity.
  - Being inclusive: A participatory and co-responsible Church, capable of appreciating its own rich variety, embraces all those we often forget or ignore.
  - An open mind: Let us avoid ideological labels and make use of all methodologies that have borne fruit.
  - Listening to each and every one: By learning from one another, we can better reflect the wonderful multi-faceted reality that Christ’s Church is meant to be.



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- An understanding of “journeying together”: To walk the path that God calls the Church to undertake for the third millennium.
  - Understanding the concept of a co-responsible Church: To value and involve the unique role and vocation of each member of the Body of Christ, for the renewal and building up of the whole Church.
  - Reaching out through ecumenical and interreligious dialogue: To dream together and journey with one another throughout the entire human family.

## Avoiding Pitfalls

As on any journey, we need to be aware of possible pitfalls that could hamper our progress during this time of synodality. The following are several pitfalls that must be avoided in order to promote the vitality and fruitfulness of the Synodal Process.

1. The temptation of wanting to lead ourselves instead of being led by God. Synodality is not a corporate strategic exercise. Rather it is a spiritual process that is led by the Holy Spirit. We can be tempted to forget that we are pilgrims and servants on the path marked out for us by God. Our humble efforts of organisation and coordination are at the service of God who guides us on our way. We are clay in the hands of the divine Potter (Isaiah 64:8).
2. The temptation to focus on ourselves and our immediate concerns. The Synodal Process is an opportunity to open up, to look around us, to see things from other points of view, and to move out in missionary outreach to the peripheries. This requires us to think long-term. This also means broadening our perspectives to the dimensions of the entire Church and asking questions, such as: What is God’s plan for the Church here and now? How can we implement God’s dream for the Church on the local level?
3. The temptation to only see “problems”. The challenges, difficulties, and hardships facing our world and our Church are many. Nevertheless, fixating on the problems will only lead us to be overwhelmed, discouraged, and cynical. We can miss the light if we focus only on the darkness. Instead of focusing only on what is not going well, let us appreciate where the Holy Spirit is generating life and see how we can let God work more fully.
4. The temptation of focusing only on structures. The Synodal Process will naturally call for a renewal of structures at various levels of the Church, in order to foster deeper communion, fuller participation, and more fruitful mission. At the same time, the experience of synodality should not focus first and foremost on structures, but on the experience of journeying together to discerning the path forward, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The conversion and renewal of structures will come about only through the on-going conversion and renewal of all the members of the Body of Christ.

5. The temptation not to look beyond the visible confines of the Church. In expressing the Gospel in our lives, lay women and men act as a leaven in the world in which we live and work. A Synodal Process is a time to dialogue with people from the worlds of economics and science, politics and culture, arts and sport, the media and social initiatives. It will be a time to reflect on ecology and peace, life issues and migration. We must keep the bigger picture in view to fulfil our mission in the world. It is also an opportunity to deepen the ecumenical journey with other Christian denominations and to deepen our understanding with other faith traditions.
6. The temptation to lose focus of the objectives of the Synodal Process. As we proceed along the journey of the Synod, we need to be careful that, while our discussions might be wide-ranging, the Synodal Process maintains the goal of discerning how God calls us to walk forward together. No one Synodal Process is going to resolve all our concerns and problems. Synodality is an attitude and an approach of moving forward in a co-responsible way that is open to welcoming God's fruits together over time.
7. The temptation of conflict and division. "That they may all be one" (John 17:21). This is the ardent prayer of Jesus to the Father, asking for unity among his disciples. The Holy Spirit leads us deeper into communion with God and one another. The seeds of division bear no fruit. It is vain to try to impose one's ideas on the whole Body through pressure or to discredit those who feel differently.
8. The temptation to treat the Synod as a kind of a parliament. This confuses synodality with a 'political battle' in which in order to govern one side must defeat the other. It is contrary to the spirit of synodality to antagonise others or to encourage divisive conflicts that threaten the unity and communion of the Church,
9. The temptation to listen only to those who are already involved in Church activities. This approach may be easier to manage, but it ultimately ignores a significant proportion of the People of God.

