

ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE SYNOD 2022 LISTENING PROCESS



January 2022 – April 2022

LISTENING PROCESS FOR SYNOD 2022 PARTICIPATION ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE

Before beginning this process, orient the group to the facility if the process is taking place in-person or to “zoom etiquette” if the session is presented virtually. Various readers are required throughout the prayer and should be assigned before the process begins. Music may be included prior to the introduction or at the end of the session.

Agenda

Ensure each consultation incorporates prayer, reflection, and exchange. At the parish level the suggested time for most synodal consultations is 90-120 minutes with the majority of the time spent in small group sharing.

- Gathering time
- Welcoming and hospitality
- Introduction
- Opening Prayer
- Scripture Reading / Reflection
- Call to Personal Prayer and Reflection
- Break for informal sharing
- Sharing around the main question and the 10 themes for consideration (small groups)
- Reporting from the small group to large group gathering
- Next Steps in the Synodal Process / Questions and Answers
- Closing prayer and dismissal

Introduction

In preparation to move prayerfully in this process, the leader begins with inviting the group to quiet with these words:

Leader:

Welcome everyone.

Tonight we are called to be pioneers who stand on the edge of great beginnings. The Church in our time stands at a crossroads.

How we intentionally choose to restructure our lives and open ourselves to transformation will determine the vitality of our faith into the future.

This is a pivotal moment in our history.

The world is changing at an accelerated rate.

It has caused us to rethink our foundational beliefs, and continue to evolve, as the Church has over centuries.

The needs and questions of the global community are shifting.

Tonight we begin searching and contemplating new questions about the future,
new needs we see emerging, and how to meet those needs.

We wish to stand open to the direction of the Spirit, and so let us pray:

Opening Prayer

Reader 1:

We are called to be pioneers who stand on the edge of great beginnings,
and unseen futures.

Pioneers filled with unwarranted confidence that visions give.

Pioneers who hear an echo of possibilities poised to enter our times.

This movement forward, if it is to continue, will not happen by itself.

The steps we must take are these: holding a great hope in common, and a passionate love
for ongoing growth in the Spirit.

This is what we most need.

“The future is in our hands.” – Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

Reading

Reader 2: Luke 3:21 – 22 The Baptism of Jesus

Silence

Reflection

*This reflection can be offered by members of the Parish Synod Team or other members of
the parish.*

Reader 3:

That day was the beginning of the best Good News the world has ever heard.

The powerful confident affirming Voice of the Father

spoke to the very core of Jesus Christ:

“You are my beloved; my favor rests on you.”

With the power of that Spirit in him, the Lord began the mission

That has shaped the hearts of believers for 21 centuries,

And inspired our growth and fidelity to this very day.

Reader 4:

Each of us, too, have been named and claimed as the Lord’s own
through the power of our Baptism.

Whether the sacrament was blessed to us by our parents as infants,
or powerfully and consciously chosen

as an adult through the Rite of Christian Intiation,
it has shaped the core of our identity and covenant with the living God
our entire lives long.

It has called us to mission.

As Jesus began his mission with the power of the Spirit in him,
tonight we begin the process of the world wide Synod in our own home diocese.
We indeed are pioneers standing on edge of great beginnings.
We have been named and chosen by our pastors to facilitate this effort,
because of our great hope and passionate love for ongoing growth in the Spirit.

Reader 5:

Today (Tonight) we lean into *sensus fidei*, holding the truth of our faith
And *sensus fidelium*, our role in articulating that faith in a clear and compelling way to
the faith community and the world of our 21st Century.

We are being invited to have an active role in determining the life of the Church
in days to come.

The Holy Father urges us to “dialogue fearlessly,”
and participate as fully and honestly as possible in this synod process.

Call to Personal Prayer and Reflection

*The leader invites those present to listen to the questions as proposed by the Synod
process and reflect quietly before moving to small group sharing. These questions may be
offered by the Leader or by another member of the Parish Synod Team.*

Leader:

We journey together into this process through prayer:

- What are you, individually and personally hearing from the Voice of God?
- What are you, comunally hearing from the Voice of God about the life of our Church at this moment in time? **How are we journeying together as the Church at this time?**
- What steps is the Spirit inviting us to take as we journey together into the future?
What can we do to journey together better?

Silence (5 min) for individual reflection

Small Group Sharing through Chat Rooms/In-person Discussion:

*It is recommended that small groups be limited to 5-7 persons, whether in person or
virtually. Participants should be informed of the length of time they have for discussion
before they begin.*

*Sharing occurs in the small groups, with facilitators **reviewing the ground rules** (page 11) and guiding the conversation. For each of the small groups, one person will act as facilitator and one as recorder/note taker to gather the insights shared.*

This time is marked by respectful listening. Facilitators are reminded to encourage their small group to be open to receiving insights and comments without interruption, correction or judgement.

*Copies of the **main Synod question and the Ten Themes/questions for the Synod** (pages 8-10) may also be distributed/reviewed at this time. The Ten Themes and associated questions are a guide for greater discussion among the participants.*

To introduce the synod process, the parish synod team may wish to orient parishioners by distributing the Main question and the Ten Themes with associated questions before the scheduled parish synod listening session. These may be posted on the parish website, included in the bulletin, distributed as a separate handout through email, etc.

If the parish is planning to conduct two or more listening sessions, the Parish Synod Team may also consider addressing 3-5 themes at a time, if this is helpful for small group discussion.

***Please note:** While encouraged, it is not necessary to offer insights on all the themes presented in the Synod process. Parish Synod Teams are encouraged to also note and include any other themes that may surface by participants during the listening session in their Parish synthesis report.*

Break (if needed by the participants)

Large Group Sharing

*Following small group discussion, **Feedback/comments** or insights can be offered and collected in the Chat room if conducted virtually or if done in-person, limited to the most impactful comments from the facilitator/recorder from each small group.*

The Leader may wish to limit this feedback time for a set period and can note particular comments that are helpful to the Synodal Church. A member of the Parish Synod Team should be assigned to collect all written comments, whether done in-person or virtually for review later by the Parish Synod Team.

Next Steps in the Synodal process / Questions and Answers

The Leader may wish to offer the following to participants, informing the participants of the next steps in the Synodal process locally.

Leader:

Thank you so much for your time and insights during this process. You have spoken from the dignity of your baptism and we are grateful for your participation and presence. Please know that your comments are valued and will now be reviewed and synthesized into a report by our parish synod team and the pastor.

This parish report created from today's discussion and insights will then be sent to the ASF Synod Committee to be included in all the comments collected from throughout the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. The deadline for our parish submission is April 30, 2022.

A synthesis report will be submitted by Archbishop Wester on behalf of the Church of Santa Fe to the United States Conference of Bishops by June 30, 2022.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

The leader or pastor thanks participants and asked all to pray together the closing prayer for the Synod.

Leader or Pastor:

Prayer for the Synod

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 our unity in You

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.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come.

Blessing from Pastor or Deacon

KEYWORDS FOR THE SYNODAL PROCESS

The theme of the Synod is “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.” The three dimensions of the theme are **communion**, **participation**, and **mission**. These three dimensions are profoundly interrelated. They are the vital pillars of a Synodal Church. There is no hierarchy between them. Rather, each one enriches and orients the other two. There is a dynamic relationship between the three that must be articulated with all three in mind.

Synod:

Synod means “journeying together” and it involves listening to the Holy Spirit and to each other in order to discern the path we are called to walk together. The synod "is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people's hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.” Synod Handbook

Communion:

By his gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith, through the covenant that he offers to his people. The communion we share finds its deepest roots in the love and unity of the Trinity. It is Christ who reconciles us to the Father and unites us with each other in the Holy Spirit. Together, we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the *sensus fidei* that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God’s call for his people.

Participation:

A call for the involvement of all who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated and ordained – to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another. This listening creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together, and guides our aspirations for the Church of the Third Millennium. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and are called to serve one another through the gifts they have each received from the Holy Spirit. In a synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to *pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions* which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will (ITC, Syn., 67-68). Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of those at the margins or who feel excluded.

Mission:

The Church exists to evangelize. We can never be centered on ourselves. Our mission is to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deeply missionary dimension to it. It is intended to enable the Church to better witness to the Gospel, especially with those who live on the spiritual, social, economic, political, geographical, and existential peripheries of our world. In this way, synodality is a path by which the Church can more fruitfully fulfil her mission of evangelization in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God’s kingdom.

MAIN QUESTION AND TEN THEMES

For a Synodal Church...Communion, Participation, and Mission

The following section should be reviewed by parish leadership and parish synodal teams as they prepare for their synodal experience. It offers reflection on the main question for consultation as well as the 10 nuclei themes that can be used.

Section 5.3 The Main Question for Consultation (from the *Vademecum*)

This Synod poses the following 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”?* (PD, 26)

In responding to this question, we are invited to:

- *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?

To help people explore this fundamental question more fully, the following themes highlight significant aspects of “lived synodality” (*Preparatory Document*, 30). In responding to these questions, it is helpful to remember that “journeying together” occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, we journey together with one another as the People of God. Next, we journey together as the People of God 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 or helpful guideline. Your conversation and dialogue do not need to be limited to the following questions:

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road. In our local Church, who are those who “walk together”? Who are those who seem further apart? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

2. LISTENING

Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. How is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore? How are the laity listened to,

especially women and young people? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? How is the contribution of consecrated men and women integrated? What are some limitations in our ability to listen, especially to those who have different views than our own? What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

3. SPEAKING OUT

*All are invited to speak with courage and **parrhesia**, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity.* What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us? How does the relationship with the local media work (not only Catholic media)? Who speaks on behalf of the local church community, and how are they chosen?

4. CELEBRATION

“Walking 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 celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our parish? How do they inspire the most important decisions? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in the ministries of lector and acolyte?

5. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION

Synodality is at the service of the mission of the Church, in which all members are called to participate. Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptized person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptized from being active in mission? What areas of mission are we neglecting? How does the parish support its members who serve society in various ways (social and political involvement, scientific research, education, promoting social justice, protecting human rights, caring for the environment, etc.)? How does the Church help these members to live out their service to society in a missionary way? How is discernment about missionary choices made and by whom?

6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding. To what extent do diverse peoples in our community come together for dialogue? What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with local religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.? How are divergences of vision, or conflicts and difficulties addressed? What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to? What experiences of dialogue and collaboration do we have with believers of other religions and with those who have no religious affiliation? How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the spheres of politics, economics, culture, civil society, and people who live in poverty?

7. ECUMENISM

The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey. What relationships does our Church community have with members of other Christian traditions and denominations in our area? What do we share and how do we journey together? What fruits have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local parish? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom? How are lay ministries and the responsibility of lay people promoted? Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level? How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils and other consultative bodies in parishes)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community. What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved? How do we promote participation in decision-making within church structures? Do our decision-making methods help us to listen to the whole People of God? What is the relationship between consultation and decision-making, and how do we put these into practice? What tools and procedures do we use to promote transparency and accountability on all levels within our parish? How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of “walking together,” listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue? What formation is offered to parish leadership to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

Remember: each parish or ecclesial group should discern and focus on those aspects of synodality (communion, participation and mission) applicable in their ministry. Participants are encouraged to share with honesty and openness about their real-life experiences, and to reflect together on what the Holy Spirit might be revealing through what they share with one another. The Synod website www.synod.va/en.html provides suggestions on how to pose these questions to various groups of people in simple and engaging ways.

Ground Rules for Consultations

- This consultation is a safe place to talk—we will treat each other and what anyone says with reverence and respect
- Discernment means speaking, listening and prayerfully reflecting so pausing in silence may be necessary in our sharing
- Our primary mode is dialogue: When we speak it is for the purpose is to advance the conversation
- We all will listen with an open mind
- One person speaks at a time
- Please strive to stay on topic
- We will keep our comments brief, so others have time to participate
- Please avoid arguing or comments that seek to advance a personal agenda
- This is a forward-leaning conversation, so you are encouraged to lean toward solutions



Special thank you to Sr. Paula Gallagher, IHM and Sr. Edna Esquibel, CSSF for their help in developing this Listening Process.