



SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Archdiocese of Adelaide Report on Submissions

MARCH 2022

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About This Report

The National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCP) is pleased to provide you with this report on the contributions from your diocese to the Synod of Bishops process.

Together with the related data, the report collates the submissions made by people within your diocese through the online process which opened on 17 October 2021 and closed on 13 March 2022. A copy of the content of the online portal is provided as *Appendix A*.

The findings include data from all submissions received online, along with some received via email and post. Where the submissions received through email and post were too long (over 250 words), a summarised version was recorded through the portal and the entire submission was then sent to the relevant diocese.

The analysis provided in this report is mainly quantitative in nature and explores the demographic characteristics of individuals and groups that participated in the process. The report also includes a list of themes that were discussed by participants, along with the complete text of their submissions.

We have attempted to provide you with as much detail as possible to help you focus your efforts on groups that might be underrepresented in your diocese. For example, if your report shows that most of your submissions were from people over the age of 60, perhaps you could encourage discussions with younger people in your diocese before the diocesan consultation period closes (30 April 2022).

Following closure of the diocesan consultation period, the diocesan synthesis report needs to be prepared and sent to the NCP.

We hope you find this current report insightful and helpful as you continue your diocesan consultation phase, and we proceed with our work on the Synod project.

Trudy Dantis

Stephen Reid

Number of Submissions Received – Adelaide

From the Archdiocese of Adelaide, we received a total of 30 completed responses in the period from October 2021 until 13 March 2022. Of the 30 submissions, five submissions were from groups or organisations and 25 submissions were from individuals (See Table 1).

Table 1: Number of submissions received	N.	%
As a group, organisation or family	5	16.7
As an individual	25	83.3
Total	30	100.0

Number of Participants

There were 25 individuals who made submissions and 45 people represented through the five groups. Overall, the total number of individual and group participants from your diocese was 70.

Individual Submissions

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2022, a total of 25 individual submissions had been received from your diocese through the online portal.

Age of Respondents

Table 2 shows the ages of individual respondents from Adelaide. About 76% per cent (19) were received from those aged 60 and over. The greatest number of submissions were received from those aged 60-79 years (13 responses).

Table 2: Age of individual respondents	N.	%
16-17 years	0	0.0
18-29 years	1	4.0
30-59 years	5	20.0
60-79 years	13	52.0
80 years and over	6	24.0
No response	0	0.0
Total	25	100.0

At the close of submissions, there was one individual submission received from those aged under 29 years.

Sex of Respondents

As Figure 1 shows, well over half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were male (56%), while about 44 per cent were female. Table 3 shows that there were 14 men and 11 women who made submissions.

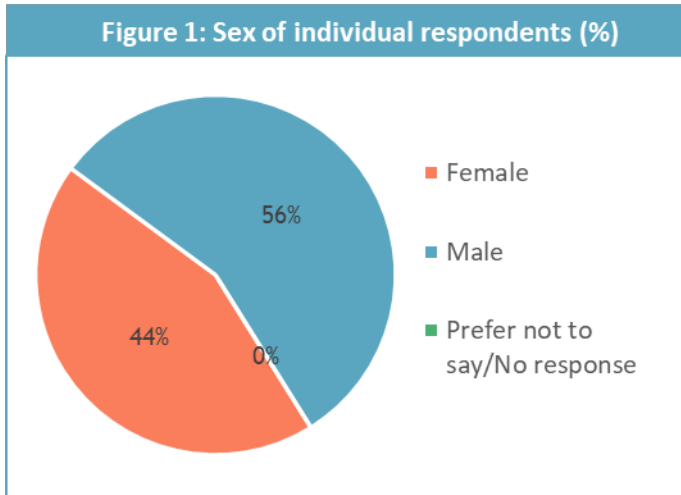


Table 3: Sex of individual respondents	N.	%
Female	11	44.0
Male	14	56.0
Prefer not to say/No response	0	0.0
Total	25	100.0

Group Submissions

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2022, there were five group submissions made from your diocese. Around 45 individuals were represented through these groups. However, one group did not report its number of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions are higher.

Table 4 shows a list of group submissions from the diocese with the number of members in each group. The largest group was SA Catholics for an Evolving Church (SACEC) with around 29 members.

Table 4: Names of group submissions	Group size
Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform	-
Colleagues and Kin	6
JanuaryC Catholics	4
SA Catholics for an Evolving Church - SACEC	29
Family	6
Total represented in groups	45

Age of Group Members

Group respondents were asked to estimate the ages of members represented in their group. Not all groups answered this question. Therefore, the results presented in Table 5 reflect only the submissions of those groups which provided information to this question. As Table 5 shows, the 60-79 years age group was the largest group represented by six members. There were no members aged 17 years and below within the groups.

Table 5: Age of group members	N.	%
0-17 years	0	0.0
18-29 years	1	2.2
30-59 years	4	8.9
60-79 years	6	13.3
80 years and over	1	2.2
No response	33	73.3
Total represented in groups	45	100.0

Responses to Synod Questions

The three Main Themes of the Synod were Communion, Participation and Mission. Each Theme had a number of subthemes as follows:

COMMUNION

- Companions on the Journey
- Listening
- Speaking out
- Celebration

PARTICIPATION

- Authority and participation
- Discerning and deciding
- Forming ourselves in synodality

MISSION

- Sharing responsibility for our common mission
- Dialogue in Church and society
- Ecumenism

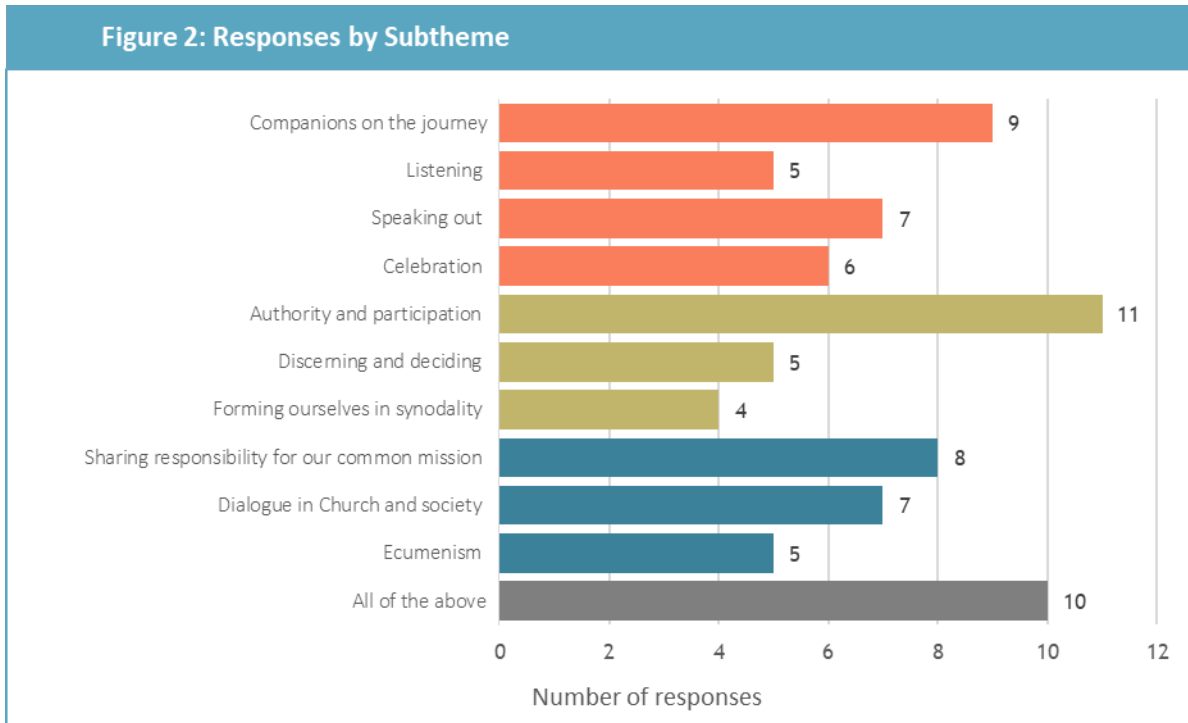
Each subtheme had a number of related questions upon which participants were invited to reflect. A full list of the questions is provided as *Appendix B*. A simpler version of these questions was included in the 'Coffee Conversation' brochures. This is attached as *Appendix C*.

Table 6: Responses by Subthemes	N.	%
COMMUNION	27	
Companions on the journey	9	30.0
Listening	5	16.7
Speaking out	7	23.3
Celebration	6	20.0
PARTICIPATION	20	
Authority and participation	11	36.7
Discerning and deciding	5	16.7
Forming ourselves in synodality	4	13.3
MISSION	20	
Sharing responsibility for our common mission	8	26.7
Dialogue in Church and society	7	23.3
Ecumenism	5	16.7
All of the above	10	33.3
Total	77	256.7

Note: Total exceeds 100% because respondents could choose more than one response

A wide range of subthemes was discussed in the submissions from groups and individuals in your diocese. Participants were allowed the option to reflect on and respond to any number of subthemes. Some responded to one or two subthemes within a particular Main Theme (e.g., Communion), whereas others picked several subthemes across all three Themes. Still others selected the option 'All of the above' to reflect on all the questions collectively.

Table 6 is the list of subthemes, with the number of responses made within each subtheme by individuals and groups. Figure 2 is graphical representation of the same table.



Among the three Main Themes, the area of 'Communion' was most frequently chosen by respondents with a total of 27 responses under the theme. The most frequently selected subthemes were 'Authority and participation' (37%), 'Companions on the journey' (30%) and 'All of the above' (33%).

In the following pages, the submissions from your diocese are grouped under five headings: Communion, Participation, Mission, Multiple or All Themes and No Themes. They include the complete text of each submission made by individual or groups. Where submissions were provided exclusively under one theme, they have been displayed under that heading. Where submissions were provided under two or more themes, they have been displayed under Multiple or All Themes. As indicated earlier, where submissions were received by the NCPR via email and post, a summarised version was entered through the portal and the entire submission was sent to the relevant diocese. The submissions have been deidentified (names removed) where necessary.

Submissions made under the 'Communion' Theme

There were three submissions made *exclusively* under the Communion Theme from your diocese.

<p>A ministry of presence is so important. How do we accompany those who are around us? Allowing thriving.</p>
<p>The concept of being 'Companions on the Journey' has nurtured my participation in the life of the Church, strengthened by my belief that God is on the journey with me: "I am the vine, you are the branches. (John:15:5) I have been 'companied on the journey' for over 60 years, by belonging to a small group, where "the joy and the hope, the grief and anguish of the men (and women) of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well."(Gaudium et Spes:1)</p>
<p>There is little doubt that we are having difficulty 'listening to God speaking to us through voices we ignore'. It is not often that we hear the voices of those who are experiencing poverty, those who feel socially excluded. The local parish structure is focused on maintaining the teachings of the Church, keeping the status quo. I doubt that it appears welcoming to those who are living on the margins. Many young people don't find the Church relevant to their lives, including my own children and grandchildren. We also have difficulty 'in listening to God speaking to us through people' who are actively involved in the Church, especially women. I have been actively involved in the Church for over 60 years, in both paid and voluntary roles. My YCW experience of being listened to was positive. A priest was appointed chaplain to each group. He attended the meetings, not in a 'Father knows best' capacity, but in a listening role. He was there to empower the young people and offer advice when needed. My experience as a Pastoral Associate was not so positive. The appointment of a new Parish Priest brought considerable changes, changes made with little or no consultation. Some of these changes affected my role considerably. We say 'we all have a role to play in discerning and living out God's call for his people'. It did not happen in this instance. This is my experience of clericalism - he was trained for a culture where the priest made all the decisions. I believe the Spirit is asking us: to ensure future training for priesthood include learning to work collaboratively as a team with women and men in inclusive ways.</p>

Submissions made under the 'Participation' Theme

There were no submissions made *exclusively* under the Participation Theme from your diocese.

Submissions made under the 'Mission' Theme

There was only one submission made *exclusively* under the Mission Theme from your diocese.

Walking with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transsexual Catholics. The Catechism of the Church says that each person must accept their sexuality. People of the above groups are too often ridiculed and treated with injustice by and within the Church. The development of a better understanding of sexuality through the social sciences in the last 100 years is rarely understood by Catholics, and especially by bishops and priests. Too often they are willing to talk about these issues, mostly in negative ways, but rarely are they willing to dialogue with them and accompany them. Some in the Church are too ready to pass judgement upon them and their lives in ignorance of the truth. Those who are baptised into Christ share the same rights and dignity as all Catholic. They are equal in dignity. and so often they want to live fully a Catholic life but feel the pain of being judged and misunderstood. Young people and adults carry distress when bishops and priests speak without understanding. No student should be asked to leave a Catholic School because they are gay, lesbian or transsexual. They have a right to a Catholic education. No teacher, nurse, or any worker in a Catholic school, hospital, welfare agency, parish, etc. should be sacked or made to feel uncomfortable in their place of employment. Pope Francis gives constant witness to his respect and welcome to gay, lesbian and trans people and has shown his support for those who work to make such people welcome. He supported civil partnerships, but since these are not available to Australia for the legal protection of such people, if they contract a civil same sex marriage, they should not be discriminated against or sacked.

Submissions made under Multiple or All Themes

The submissions in this section were made by individuals and groups who picked two or more subthemes across all the three Main Themes, or those who selected the option 'All of the above'. A total of 25 submissions were made within this category.

I am praying that the Holy Spirit will guide this process – as someone who remembers the initial excitement and hope brought by the Vatican Council II, I am praying that we may be able to build on some of the visions of this time. The documents called for decisions respecting local cultures, communities and circumstances.

Our world today is a very different one – this could be our last chance to really make a difference in the lives of so many.

Amongst my hopes are:

That structures and processes within the Church are reviewed and changed to allow for:

- a. Recruitment of suitable qualified and experienced women and men to the most senior roles in diocese, national bodies and parishes.
- b. The appointment of bishops to include genuine consultation with laity who can call forth suitable persons for their diocese.
- c. Naming the negative elements of clericalism from both perspectives – from those ordained and from laity who hold outdated understandings.
- d. Training of the those called to the priesthood – both women and men – be formed in a spirit of service – and not allowed to wear any official clerical dress until after ordination.

Dear fellow travellers on this 2022-2023 Synodal Journey,

In my faithful 80 years' experience of Church, I have been blessed to experience many changes. A unique experience was my leadership of the parish of [Parish], from 1987 to 2000. This appointment was authorized by Archbishop Faulkner's Diocesan Pastoral Team. I worked with theologians as liturgical moderators, [Name], [Name], and [Name], and with a parish pastoral team. Our vision over the 12 years came from the diocesan vision "Community for the World" and the visit of three educators from Latin America promoting Basic Ecclesial Communities.

Highlights for me were the many lay ministries that were developed among the very multicultural and disadvantaged parishioners, in maintenance of a lively community through creative liturgies, youth work, adult faith sharing and mission to the poor area where we were situated through visitation and outreach.

The appointment of a lay leader of a parish is covered and enabled in Canon Law. Other communities in Adelaide Diocese experience many years of Lay Ecclesial

Ministry which is widespread and well documented in USA.

I see many advantages of this kind of solution to the shortage of Australian Priests:

- Replaces the need for inappropriate clergy with different cultures from overseas.
- Gives women leadership recognition for the gifts they can contribute to a church desperate for a community rather than a hierarchical model.
- Leaves behind clericalism and invites synodality.
- Enables Small Christian Communities where parish and school families can meet and share, to grow in understanding of how to belong to the sort of Church Jesus would recognize.

Thanks!

[The] Church is the bride of Christ, established by our good Lord and handed over to Peter, symbolising the hierarchy. Nothing shall prevail against it. This world is ruled by powers of darkness. However, we are called to be the Light and salt. It's not easy as the Church wrestles with unseen forces, both within and outside.

Let's not give in or give up. Let's stand by what our Lord established. He did not have any women among His Apostles, neither did He give the keys to Mary. Women have their own place. The rib should be treated as rib and not equalled to the entire body. God created us in His image and likeness. He created us male & female. Who are we to say that God is also LGBTQZGJIYRDDFHIIY4E68996421...? Are we questioning the nature of God and the authenticity of Bible, by even considering it as a gender?

[The] Church needs to stand up and from its pulpits voice out and expose the lies of evil. It has to expose the darkness, in all its forms. Our pulpits have to become the forefront of our battle. Our church doors to become a refuge to all who seek and are in need. We need to cater to all the faithful based on the teachings of God and not on how the society wants the Church to be. Our world is wounded. [The] Church has to be the healing balm, even if it hurts temporarily. Changing the balm destroys its effectiveness and may cause more pain. [The] Church shouldn't become a sugar-coated Santa Claus.

We are a diverse group of Adelaide Catholics who share a love, care, concern and hope for our Church, locally, in Australia and throughout the world. We come together, to reflect on the world, the Church, the Gospel and the spiritual life of our people.

Our Vision

We strive to be a Church, reading the signs of the times and proclaiming Gospel values for contemporary life. Our natural orientation is towards a Church and a broader community that is creating a better world, where people on the margins are afforded

equality in dignity, justice and fairness. Catholic social and environmental teachings are our guides. Jesus is our centre.

Our synodal journey.

We strive for a Church where everyone finds a place: Eucharistic communities are open and welcoming;

We seek to grow a Church that is collaborative and inclusive of our social and cultural diversity, attentive to serving the needs of our world, especially with and alongside those who are in any way living with poverty.

What needs to change.

The following are needed to become a synodal Church:

- Shared leadership, creating opportunities for a more dynamic and learning community.
- Recognition for the experience, aspirations and convictions of Catholics seeking renewal
- Women and other marginalised people are engaged equitably at every level
- Catholics participate in the decision-making processes of the Church
- Good governance through accountability, transparency, inclusion and subsidiarity
- Identifying and promoting models of Church reflecting Gospel values appropriate for 21st century Australia.

Among those engaged with Church activities there is a strong sense of community, identity and belonging. However, this is accompanied by deep feelings of mistrust of official pronouncements and casual ignoring of Church leadership. Most Catholics have deliberately disengaged.

The sense of the faith of Catholics and the growing calls for reform reflect a loss of direction and purpose. Key issues include:

- Discrimination against women and LGBTI+ people
- Drift away from Mass and the sacraments
- Abandoning of confession/reconciliation
- Deteriorating credibility of the hierarchy
- Disregard for rules on contraception, sacramental reception and cohabitation
- Lack of transparency, accountability and inclusivity in governance
- Discrepancies between what the Church teaches and what Catholics believe
- Ongoing traumatising of victims/survivors of sexual and other abuse.

These factors characterise the present system and culture as immoral, irresponsible and undermining of the way of Jesus.

What is to be done?

Mission

Refocus on personal conversion. To rise to the level of the times, Catholics need a strong diet of critical reflection on scripture, theology and ecclesiology consistent with advances in the human sciences, not the thin gruel of most current preaching and teaching.

Communion

Create opportunities for people to share their experiences, insights and convictions.
Christian living is grounded in conversion to the way of Jesus and commitment to his vision and values; Christian community is formed when believers come together.
Practice good governance.

Participation.

Create opportunities for all Catholics to participate fully in all aspects of Church.

Synodality must be at the heart of all we do, as it is central to ensuring that the Church is faithful to the teachings of Jesus. It requires pastoral leadership that has a strong commitment to **co-responsibility for the Church's mission.**

We seek a Church that:

- recognises the **innate dignity of every human person, and rejects all forms of discrimination**
- **is inclusive and attentive to all voices in its leadership and decision-making**
- **welcomes women and men equally into all its roles of leadership, ministry and service**
- **respects local culture, communities and circumstances, especially through small group reflections, discussions and activities**
- maintains an **ongoing and open dialogue with all Christ's faithful**
- **provides faith development opportunities for all, recognising the importance of scripture, theology and liturgy in the lives of all the faithful**
- is humble and free of the culture of **clericalism**
- promotes healing and restoration of dignity for **victims of clerical sexual abuse**
- uses **technology to connect and engage people.**

We hope for a Church that plays a role in society at large by focussing on the needs of those marginalised by discrimination and poverty, which uses its resources in practical and effective support. This will be a Church that lives the Great Commandment, declares it and is measured against it by members and others - 'See how they love one

another!' and is trusted by the Australian community as it seeks a more just, compassionate and egalitarian society.

This contribution emerges from our participation in a small group, meeting weekly to share our faith and celebrate communion. Our sharing offers an experience of faith, of relationships, of immanence and transcendence. In this community of love, we are nurtured and grow as we explore our faith in freedom. Our 'gutsy' celebrations are encounters with God beyond our own, sometimes narrow, horizons. It is a place to belong, bringing together faith and culture, an authentic synodal path.

We long for a Church where:

- Communion is realised by respecting the sense of faith of the faithful in:
Accepting women as equals in every aspect of the Church;
- Gender-inclusive language driving a culture of equality and inclusivity.

Participation is characterised by:

- Relationships of respect, mutual service and dignity of all
- Synodality as the key feature of local, community, small group, parish and diocesan interactions
- Contemporary developments in the natural and human sciences are integrated with faith and tradition to meet the needs of our times
- Discovering God-for-us today illuminates our tradition and scriptures.

Mission is inspired by:

- A vision of liberty, inclusivity, diversity and informed, enabling compassion for every person
- The gifts of the Spirit as the measure of authenticity in people everywhere
- Welcome for other Christians as family, sharing a common Baptism
- Respect for the spiritual wisdom of First Nations people as we walk together.

We are at a critical moment in the life of the Church and the world. Sixty years after Vatican II was convened, the universal Church is faced with dramatic changes that once again demand the calling of an ecumenical council, which alone has the authority to address those issues that are impacting the capacity to become a Church of missionary disciples. The Synod on Synodality is a logical preparatory step for creating the agenda for a new ecumenical council. But it does not have the authority to bring about the renewal of either the spirit needed to direct mission in the 21st century or the structures which can fan the flame of this spirit.

The issues which an ecumenical council needs to address include:

- the threats to life on Earth
- the divisions within the human community
- new understandings of the human person and social relations
- the transformations wrought by the digital world and the future of artificial intelligence
- the patriarchal paradigm that has been imposed on the fundamental theological and ecclesiological expression of the Gospel since the early days of Christianity
- the reconstitution of ministry in the Church to ensure Christian communities have access to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist
- the fostering of new forms of Christian community beyond the parish structure
- the distortions of the Gospel by fundamentalist and charismatic churches
- the demands of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in a world of religious pluralism
- the recognition that we are now living in a post-secular world.

Participation in the life of the Church should be for many a birth to death experience through the Sacraments. nurtured by inclusion in all forms of worship. Sadly, there is a vacuum from an early age when the young feel the lack of relevance in their lives. Perhaps Jesus attributes needs to be understood in a down to earth way as someone good to be around, a son, a friend a rebel when required who treated people from all walks of life fairly. Someone who you might treat as a friend and want to relate to. A new viewing of the conservative Church to breathe life and a future is desperately needed. One of the better ways is to encourage whole of family participation at Sunday worship where the family takes responsibility for the Liturgy of the day.

I ask that the Synod and its members support the vision of the “synodal church” that is being expressed and taught by Pope Francis; and that they continue to do so after the Synod has concluded, by working collaboratively with others. I believe that developing a ‘synodal culture’ in place of the older ‘clerical culture is a key element; one that will take courage and commitment, patience and persistence. The whole process must be undertaken dialogically; that is, in conversation with others and being prepared to change at the deepest level as the process unfolds. It must be inclusive of the full range of Church members (active, marginalised, absent) attentive to their diverse experience). In fact, all those of good will who wish to be involved must be valued as potential contributors: other Christians, people of other faiths, and those who are presently unsure or unwilling to commit themselves to the life of faith. It is clear from the texts provided that this preparatory process has been undertaken in good faith and that the Synod instruments have much to offer members. My particular and limited dreams and hopes reflect my life experience as a “child of Vatican II” who

increasingly struggles to feel at home in the church; but also one whose prayerful reflection and discernment fills me with hope.

I understand that the Church needs to respond to the world as it finds it and that that requires discussion, compassion and listening, themes for this synod.

I just wanted to say as a returning Catholic that it was the beauty and reverence of the Latin Mass that helped draw me back into the fold. Very often these days the Church seems to be too willing to change to accommodate the world. But it is the keeper of God's eternal truth and must continue to be in the world but not of it.

We see flux and relentless change all around us. The Church must not attempt to join that but be the unmoved centre, the rock on which people can find certainty and solidity.

Thank you for listening.

Appalled at ongoing sexism and misogyny of institutional Church and structures, and no way to change these.

What is the difference between an ecumenical council and a general synod?

As companions on the journey, we need to break down barriers that divide us and exclude people from the Eucharist. No one should be excluded from the Eucharist as now divorced and re-married people are. The annulment process is a traumatic experience and only the brave or those with a good education go for it. Jesus would never have excluded people who wanted to participate in the Eucharist including LGBTI people. We cannot judge. People must follow their own informed conscience. Women should be admitted to all priestly orders. At least please start with women deacons. So many women are fulfilling that role now.

Journeying together in a synodal Church has not been my experience, rather I have felt like somebody back towards the tail of a procession led by the clergy but inevitably following whatever direction the clergy has chosen. And further back again in that line of followers have been those excluded or inhibited from real participation as a result of divorce, or lifestyles or decisions at odds with formal Church teaching. I realise that imagery can be taken too far sometimes but Christ said to St Peter "feed my sheep". He was speaking to St Peter as his Pontiff. I suggest the "sheep" were not just the laity but the clergy as well. We are all sheep and must walk and live together: we must be synodal. The Church has much to learn from the lived experiences of the faithful.

We also have much to learn from the more highly developed synodal experience of the Anglican and Uniting churches and we should walk with them.

Christ lived with the joys and sorrows of his followers. I suggest partly because of numbers but also because of clericalism (and as well the absence of regular confession) our priesthood is quite out of touch with the day to day lives of ordinary Catholics particularly the younger people. It cannot hope to restore that connection in a diminishing cohort. Attention is urgently needed to redress this, not just through training deacons but by ensuring greater access to Holy Orders. At the very least married priests are a must and the Church's attitude to celibacy seems to me to have no sensible foundation in scripture or theology.

The Holy Spirit speaks to all not just the powerful.

Convent and Catholic school educated I am one of thousands of rusted-on Catholics still believing in the Gospel message for today. However, we look at the crumbling structure and excluding policies of the church's hierarchy with disbelieving sorrow. Australian bishops would listen to our concerns we were told. Meetings, submissions, personal stories followed with genuine commitment. We responded but were not heard by the Australian Bishops to present our concerns at the Plenary Council and Pope Francis. General acceptance and full inclusion of women in the Church's ministry was of the utmost importance for our community. A transparent, humble, inclusive church followed. The voice of the laity was not heard. Meanwhile the pews grow emptier, the congregations older, tired and disillusioned. Volunteers are fewer and less able to take on responsibilities. Women remain subservient with even a role as deacon ignored. So, the young women of today walk away from a church which does not honour their skills, social conscience or compassion. Why? Because they are women! We have lost them, and the situation will grow worse as developing countries work towards better educated, better supported young women. And where will the teenage girls of today go when the doors of the Catholic church are firmly closed against them? The issues are clear- climate change, the environment, female exploitation, poverty have already seen the young take up the challenges. How much could be achieved if our church leaders welcomed their talents and optimism in creating a community grounded in faith and living the reality of the gospel

I feel that the Church in our time does not connect with the lives of people today and is now out of touch. Catholics today live in a more secular world; bringing challenges to former life partnerships; divergent abuse exploitation; confronting issues about sexuality who society recognised are not deviant behaviours, yet priest condemn through ignorance.

The Church Jesus founded was a Caring Church supporting all who suffered or were disadvantaged, regardless of their social class and challenging life situations. Those

who followed Him were drawn by His compassion - initially coming in Wonder and then Love before listening to his teachings. Today the Catholics listen to outdated messaging from earlier times; do not accept that some lives carry heavy damage from earlier years; priests that judge do not leave judgements to a God who knows all.

So, in today's Church let it offer caring and patience whilst listening to the lives of its people. Let the Church be more open to diverse opinions and life situations of today's world. Be more simplistic in black or white tunic robes; let the Hierarchy forgo the dress of Middle Age Kings and rulers; accept simpler churches without causing anxiety about Church debt. Allow Priests to marry and be conversant in understanding marriage advice. Accept that many marriages no longer bring spiritual or human growth. Rethink RE in schools making it more to developmental age understandings. Use reference to the challenges Jesus faced in life and learn how to face bullying, loneliness, condemnation and let Jesus be the model for living in our world by choice to reflect understanding of our difficult alienation at times and recognise this.

Mission

'Our mission is to witness the love of God in the midst of the whole human family.

I live with my wife in a small retirement village where:

Most profess a Christian faith - Catholic, Church of England, Church of Christ, Pentecostal.

I experience much love, respect and care among our villagers.

We learn and grow from our friendship and love for each other.

Blackwood Catholic is my parish church - from this community I receive inspiration, spiritual growth and support.

When I enter my village, I enter my 'Local Church'.

Communion

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?

I find that the Covid Marshals who we meet before Mass give me a sense of walking together. In addition to their role as Marshals they offer friendship and companionship.

The presence of our Priest and Deacon in the lobby after Mass is important. I feel that I am taking them with me as I return to my 'Local Church.'

Elderly people who come to Mass alone seem isolated and, on the margins, especially at these times of physical separateness.

We feel that there is too much talk at every level and not enough action at the base level.

We would like to see our Parish/Local church become more meaningful in our

daily/weekly lives.

If there is no 'parish life' as such, then the Parish is dead and offers nothing to its local community

In my local church, it seems that people who work in senior positions within the diocese or Catholic organisations, older people and well-organised activists are listened to. Those who are left out include: young practising Catholics, those who are not in senior positions in the Church or society, people from migrant/ethnically diverse communities, international priests, and seminarians.

Often it does not seem clear what the parameters are of a particular synodal approach. For example, at a diocesan level, people will spend decades discussing issues like female ordination and married priests, which are decisions that cannot be made at a local level, at the expense of issues on which the diocese could act.

It is also often unclear how the synodal approach fits with the hierarchical structure of the Church. Some try to claim that the Church can either be hierarchical or synodal, but cannot be both, which is obviously a false claim, but a claim that is so often repeated that people believe it. Furthermore, often what people are agitating through the synodal approach is the bringing down of the hierarchy.

Finally, the synodal approach can often seem to detract from mission because it is so inward looking. We need to be going out and proclaiming the Good News. We need to be going out and making disciples, baptising and teaching. There also seems to be an assumption that to be a missionary disciple one needs to be getting involved in synodal processes, but I would not see this as even vaguely necessary for discipleship. It seems that constant focus on a synodal approach is the very epitome of a self-referential church.

The findings of the 2013 - 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted many failings within our Church, especially in the area of governance and leadership.

It seems however that in many places, like so many reports and Royal Commission findings, the Southern Cross Report with its 86 recommendations has been put on a shelf and being ignored.

Thankfully the lay-led Coalition for Catholic Church Reform (ACCCR) has been doing a lot in coordinating efforts among many lay people to stimulate efforts to reform our Church.

One of the reasons given for the lack of interest and participation in the Plenary Council or the synodal process is the assumption that bishops won't take any notice anyway, so why bother!

In his Exhortation 'The Joy of the Gospel' Pope Francis said that a bishop must "listen to everyone and not simply to those who tell him what he would like to hear". That was eight years ago. So, we still have a long way to go.

And speaking of the Synod of Bishops recently he spoke of a synodal Church as a Church which listens and which realises that "listening is more than simply hearing". If we are to be truly a synodal church then our bishops and the faithful must address all the issues raised in the Light of the Southern Cross report and in particular address the issue of clericalism in our church.

One serious issue within our Church world-wide is that of clericalism. Pope Francis has frequently drawn attention to this persistent evil in our church. And yet it continues, and one of the very worrying aspects of this problem is the widespread evidence of clericalism among our younger clergy. Many are saying: what is wrong with our seminaries?

The Light of the Southern Cross report has a large section devoted to the training and selection of candidates for the priesthood with several specific recommendations.

In recent times there have been several articles in the English TABLET calling for reform of the seminaries. One Canon lawyer recently said he is 'terrified' by young conservative seminarians. It is a widespread problem here in Australia too. The submissions to the Plenary Council included several expressing concern regarding clericalism among the clergy, which was often associated with not listening to the concerns of the laity. Anecdotally some have said there is too much influence of Opus Dei in our seminaries.

Speaking to a group of Seminarians last year Pope Francis said: "Clericalism is a perversion of the priesthood: it is a perversion. And rigidity is one of the manifestations of clericalism". He added: "When I find a rigid seminarian or young priest, I say 'something bad is happening to this one on the inside.' Behind every rigidity, there is a serious problem, because rigidity lacks humanity."

Clericalism is something that needs to be addressed in every diocese and especially at our seminaries.

I believe that the Third Rite of Reconciliation, as practised in the late 1990s (including in my archdiocese around the time that I was a Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council when Leonard Faulkner and Philip Wilson were Archbishops), should be reintroduced. It was a very popular form of reconciliation, with churches usually quite full. These days I am embarrassed by the negligible attendances at Reconciliation Second Rite services (sometimes about 5 or 10 people in a large church), and I feel sorry for our priests who conduct them. A significant number of people have discontinued attending Reconciliation. Others and I have made comments about this in some of the synodal lead-up consultations, but we have seen little about it in the summaries, due perhaps to a fear by some priests and bishops that "Rome" may not like the

suggestion - but Pope Francis wants to hear what the people think, not just what the bishops will pass on to him! It would be embarrassing to take someone thinking of becoming a Catholic along to a Second Rite and have them see the small attendance - it would be another reason to put them off the Catholic Church. [Name]

We the undersigned, a small group of activists calling for Church Reform submit the following:

- Pastoral Councils should be mandatory
- Pastoral planning is essential when parishes merge
- Parishes need a pastoral vision
- An essential need for the development of emotional intelligence and spiritual discernment skills for all levels of leadership of the Church
- Consider a model of having a pastoral leadership group of 4 to 6 including the Priest. This pastoral leadership group have the authority to make decisions, reflecting a servant leadership style, for the Parish community. The pastoral leadership group are responsible for facilitating the development of a Mission for the Parish. Give the Parish community responsibility for their own spiritual development.
- Consider the role of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in the formation of trainee Priests to build emotional intelligence, access their pastoral heart and develop an awareness of collaborative teamwork.
- Consider the role of ongoing Supervision for all levels of leadership
- Embrace diversity in Ministry e.g., Women welcomed into all levels of Ministry. People who are celebrants within a local community to be called on when needed.
- Consider inviting parishes to develop a Position Description to attract Priests who fit the culture of the Parish. Consider implementing Performance Reviews of people in pastoral leadership.
- Allow and support diverse models of Catholic community to emerge as possible ways in which the Church might discover alternative pathways to how the Gospel might light the spark of faith within people.

Please do not imitate failures of other Christian churches. NO women priests or gay marriages.

Please allow qualified lay people a say in diocesan affairs. Let the laity pick their bishops. Let us have married priests to save the faith otherwise it will die. snuffed out like a candle.

Submissions made under No Themes

There was one submission where the respondent did not select any of the options provided.

Dear Bishops. Please restore the ability to attend the Latin Mass as you have the authority to do so. It is a treasure which I cannot live without.

Conclusion

Together with a demographic analysis, this report presented the collated submissions that were received from your diocese through the online portal in the diocesan consultation stage of the Synod of Bishops. The submissions were made under the three Main Themes of the Synod: Communion, Participation and Mission.

The purpose of the diocesan consultation is to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit through the responses shared by the People of God about their insights, joys and challenges of the synodal experience. Dioceses are encouraged to use the submissions contained in this report to prepare their diocesan synthesis. Other useful sources of data include:

- Synod submissions sent directly to the diocese via post or email.
- Diocesan Reports from the Plenary Council Phase 1
(available at: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/reports/>).
- Diocesan reports prepared from the 2017 Australian Catholic Bishops Youth Survey
(If you do not have this report, your diocesan contact person may request a copy from the NCPN).
- Information from diocesan synods and gatherings that have taken place in recent years.

Resources to help you complete the diocesan synthesis can be found on the Australian Synod of Bishops website at <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch#Synthesis>. The diocesan synthesis will need to be sent to the NCPN by Sunday, 1 May 2022.

The National Centre for Pastoral Research sincerely thanks all the people from your diocese who participated in the consultation and those who continue to be engaged in the journey towards the Synod of Bishops 2023.

Appendix A: Online Portal



FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION



As the Synod of Bishops prepares for its XVI Ordinary General Assembly in October 2023, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: Synodality. He writes:

"It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium. This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church's 'renewal' proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task."

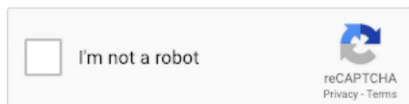
The Australian Bishops are inviting you to contribute to this consultation. You would have already reflected on the questions. If not, please click this link to access the Synod Listening and Discernment Adult Session Guides: www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch

If you have already summarised your or your group's reflection, this short submission process should only take 5-10 minutes to complete. If you do not want to answer any question, move on to the next one.

This portal accepts submissions of 250 words or less. If you would like to make a larger submission, please send it directly to your diocese

If you are aged under 16, please have a parent or guardian complete the submission on your behalf. You can make your submission anonymously or you can provide your details at the end. This submission portal will remain open until **Sunday 13 March 2022**.

Before you commence the submission process, please complete the following task so we know you're a real person . .



In which diocese are you or your group located?

(Note: Eastern Rite dioceses/paparchies and Ordinariates are listed underneath the geographical dioceses.)

Are you responding on behalf of a group or as an individual?

- As a group, organisation or family
 As an individual

What is the name of your group?

Please describe briefly the people in your group, such as the type of group, special characteristics, its ethnic makeup, interest area, etc. Some examples could be:

We are a group of 25 Catholics of all ages and ethnicities passionate about social justice issues.

or:

Our group is a family of five who are actively involved in our local parish.

How many people in your group are in each of the following age groups?

0-17 years

18-29 years

30-59 years

60-79 years

80 years and over

How old are you?

(Note: if you are aged under 16, please ask a parent or guardian to complete this submission on your behalf.)

- 16-17 years
- 18-29 years
- 30-59 years
- 60-79 years
- 80 years and over

Are you . . .

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following ten themes did you or your group reflect upon? (Please select as many as you like.)

If you are unsure, please click on this link to learn about the ten themes in greater detail:
www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch

Communion

- Companions on the Journey** - In the Church and in society we are side by side on the same road
- Listening** - Listening is the first step, but it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice
- Speaking out** - All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, in freedom, truth, and charity
- Celebration** - "Walking together" is only possible if it is based on communal listening to the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist

Participation

- Authority and participation** - A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church
- Discerning and deciding** - In a synodal style we make decisions through discernment of what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community
- Forming ourselves in synodality** - Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning

Mission

- 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
- Dialogue in Church and society** - Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding
- Ecumenism** - The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey
- All of the above**

Please provide a summary of your or your group's reflection in 250 words or less.

Because of the nature of this synodal process and the short timeline, we regret that we are not able to accept additional information.

OPTIONAL. If you would like to include your contact details, please do so below. If not, simply click through to the next page to make your submission.

Name

Email address

Thank you for participating in the local consultation for the Synod of Bishops.

Please submit your response by clicking the '->' button below. You will then have the option of downloading a copy of your response.

Once submitted you will be unable to go back.

*For technical assistance in completing this submission,
please contact the ACBC National Centre for Pastoral Research via email at stephen.roid@catholic.org.au*

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Appendix B: Full List of Questions

XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Questions for Reflection



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”?

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* [sense of faith] that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God’s call for his people.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Matthew 25:31-46
- Luke 12:35-40
- Mark 9:38-48
- Luke 14:12-14

RELATED 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, marginalisation, 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 Christian 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 community? 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?

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, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God’s will. Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the involvement of those at the margins or who feel excluded.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Matthew 25:31-46
- Mark 9:38-48
- Luke 12:35-40
- Luke 14:12-14

RELATED QUESTIONS

1. 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 Church? 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 in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)?
- How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?

2. 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 hierarchical 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?
- How can we grow in communal spiritual discernment?

3. 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 foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

MISSION

The Church exists to evangelise. We can never be centred on ourselves. Our mission is to witness the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. This Synodal Process has a deep 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 evangelisation in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God's kingdom.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Matthew 9:35-37
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Luke 10:1-9
- Luke 10:17-24

RELATED QUESTIONS

1. 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 baptised person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptised from being active in mission?
- What areas of mission are we neglecting?
- How does the community 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?

2. 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 neighbouring dioceses, 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?

3. 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? 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?

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Appendix C: Coffee Conversation Brochure

10. WALKING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS/ ECUMENISM

Walking with other Christians is essential to our mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

- How well do we as Catholics know our sisters and brothers in other churches?
- What do we share and how do we journey with Christians from other churches (denominations)?
- Why don't we do more together?

RESPOND

You are invited to listen to each other carefully and prepare a response of up to 250 words. The submission can consider points like:

- Is there a common thread in what was shared? Is there something missing that you had expected would be said?
- Have you received any particular insight or revelation? What is it?
- Where did you experience a sense of harmony with others as you shared with one another?
- What are the feelings of the group? Is there consensus or disagreement?
- What is the way forward?

HAVE YOUR SAY

1. Online, by 27 FEBRUARY 2022 using the **SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE HERE** button at <https://www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch>
Or use the QR Code below to visit the page.



2. While online responses are preferred, you may wish to contact your local Diocesan Pastoral Office to submit your response by 18 FEBRUARY 2022.

MORE INFORMATION

Website: www.catholic.org.au/synodalchurch
Email: ncpr@catholic.org.au



Material adapted from the Archdiocese of Wellington Synod Resource. Used with permission.



COFFEE CONVERSATIONS

**Preparing for the Synod:
Let's walk together with one another**

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.

Welcome and thank you for participating!

We want to hear from you!

To start your conversation, choose one or more topics from 1-10, then reflect on the questions.

COMMUNION

1. COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

Jesus wants us to walk together, side by side.

- How do you feel we as Catholics are doing at walking side-by-side?
- Who do you feel is included / welcome on the church's local journey?
- Who is not included or welcomed?

2. OUR LISTENING

Listening is the first step - it requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice.

- How good are we Catholics at listening?
- Who do we need to listen to more? (Consider – women, young people, lay people, those on the margins of society, minority groups, the socially discarded and excluded.)
- What stops us from listening more carefully?

3. OUR SPEAKING OUT

Everyone is invited to speak boldly and courageously in freedom, truth and love.

- How good are we as Catholics at speaking out in public?
- How do we say what is important to us as Catholics?
- What helps or hinders our public visibility?

4. OUR CELEBRATION

For Catholics, 'togetherness' is based on gathering to explore the Gospels (Word) and to break bread (Eucharist).

- Are our Catholic gatherings achieving their purpose for our people?
- How does our gathering for prayer (including Mass) meet people's needs?
- How do they fail to meet people's needs?

PARTICIPATION

5. SHARING AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Our Church is all about participation and shared responsibility.

- Catholics aim to balance authority and governance with teamwork and co-responsibility. How well do we achieve this?
- How could we balance these better?
- How do we encourage lay involvement, participation and leadership?

6. OUR DISCERNMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

Our aim is to make decisions by discerning what the Holy Spirit is saying through our whole community.

- How well do you feel we do this?
- What methods or processes do Catholic communities use to include people in discernment and decision-making?
- What do you think we should do to improve our efforts in this?

7. BEING FORMED TO JOURNEY TOGETHER

All of us need to be open to change and receive ongoing learning and formation to be Synodal.

- To what extent do you find Catholics are open to change and new learning?
- How do we as a Catholic community form our people to listen, participate and be open to change?
- Have you found Church leaders to be willing to listen, participate and remain open to new ways?

MISSION

8. OUR COMMON MISSION

Walking together enables us all to accept our mission to share the Good News.

- Do we as Catholics take this mission seriously?
- How exactly do we as Church members spread the Good News of Jesus Christ?
- What stops us from being active in mission?

9. OUR CONVERSATIONS

Genuine conversation requires perseverance and patience but leads to understanding.

- As Catholics, how good are we at conversation – both listening and sharing?
- Good conversation (dialogue) leads to collaboration – how, and how well, do we collaborate as Catholics in our local community?
- In what ways could we dialogue and collaborate better with others in society (e.g., in politics, economics, culture, civil society, and those who are poor or disadvantaged?)

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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).



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

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