



Come
Share
Listen



Three Key Words: Communion, Participation and Mission

What is 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.

What is 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 (ICT, Syn., 67-68). Genuine efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of those at the margins or who feel excluded.

What is Mission?

The Church exists to evangelize. We can never be centered 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 fulfill her mission of evangelization in the world, as a leaven at the service of the coming of God's kingdom

Fundamental Question and Ten Core Themes of the Synod

Fundamental Question: (to be asked as a final, closing question)

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”?

1. In the Church and in society, we are side by side on the same road.

In your local Church, who are the ones “journeying together”?

When we say: “our Church,” who is part of it?

Who is asking us to journey together?

Who are the road companions, including those outside the ecclesial perimeter?

What persons or groups are left on the margins, expressly or in fact?

2. Listening is the first step, but it requires having an open mind and heart, without prejudices.

To whom does our particular Church “need to listen to”?

How are the Laity, especially young people and women, listened to?

How do we integrate the contribution of Consecrated Men and Women?

What space is there for the voice of minorities, the discarded, and the excluded?

Do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening?

How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?

3. All are invited to speak with courage and parrhesia, that is, integrating freedom, truth, and charity.

How do we promote a free and authentic style of communication within the community and its organizations, without duplicity and opportunism?

And in relation to the society of which we are a part?

When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?

How does the relationship with the media system (not only Catholic media) work?

Who speaks on behalf of the Christian community, and how are they chosen?

4. *“Journeying 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 celebration inspire and direct our “journeying together”?

How do they inspire the most important decisions?

How do we promote the active participation of all the Faithful in the liturgy and the exercise of the sanctifying function?

What space is given to the exercise of the ministries of the reader and acolyte?

5. *Synodality is at the service of the Church’s mission, in which all her members are called to participate.*

Since we are all missionary disciples, how is each Baptized person called to be a protagonist in the mission?

How does the community support its members committed to service in society (social and political commitment, in scientific research and teaching, in the promotion of social justice, in the protection of human rights, and in caring for the Common home, etc.)?

How do you help them to live out these commitments in a logic of mission?

How is discernment about mission-related choices made, and who participates in it?

How are the different traditions that constitute the patrimony of many Churches, especially the Oriental ones, integrated and adapted, with respect to the synodal style, in view of an effective Christian witness?

How does collaboration work in territories where different *sui iuris* Churches are present?

6. *Dialogue is a path of perseverance that also includes silences and sufferings, but which is capable of gathering the experience of persons and peoples.*

What are the places and modes of dialogue within our particular Church?

How are divergences of vision, the conflicts, the difficulties addressed?

How do we promote collaboration with neighboring Dioceses, with and among religious communities in the area, with and among lay associations and movements, etc.?

What experiences of dialogue and shared commitment do we have with believers of other religions and with non-believers?

How does the Church dialogue with and learn from other sectors of society: the world of politics, economics, culture, civil society, the poor...?

7. *The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey.*

What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations?

What areas do they concern? What fruits have we drawn from this “journeying together”?

What are the difficulties?

8. *A synodal Church is a participatory and co-responsible Church.*

How do we identify the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them, and the steps to be taken?

How is authority exercised within our particular Church?

What are the practices of teamwork and co-responsibility?

How are lay ministries and the assumption of responsibility by the Faithful promoted?

How do synodal bodies function at the level of the particular Church?

Are they a fruitful experience?

9. *In a synodal style, decisions are made through discernment, based on a consensus that flows from the common obedience to the Spirit.*

By what procedures and methods do we discern together and make decisions? How can they be improved?

How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchically structured communities?

How do we articulate the consultative phase with the deliberative one, the process of decision-making with the moment of *decision-taking*?

How and with what tools do we promote transparency and accountability?

10. *The spirituality of journeying together is called to become an educational principle for the formation of the human person and of the Christian, of the families, and of the communities.*

How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of “journeying together,” listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

What formation do we offer for discernment and the exercise of authority?

What tools help us to read the dynamics of the culture in which we are immersed and their impact on our style of Church?