



# Becoming a synodal Church

*FCBCO assembly, Suva February 7 2023*

*Sr Nathalie Becquart, xmcj, Under-Secretary  
to the General Secretariat for the Synod*



«Enlarge the space  
of your tent»  
(Is 54:2)

**9. The most important thing is the experience, that is to say, that the Continental Stage be an experience that helps to grow in the sense of Synodality in the journey of the Church. The documents and events are very important, insofar as they lead to the greater goal, which is to grow in Synodality from the identity of being Church.**

# Listening to your experience

When you think of your experience of synodality, what word or image come to your mind?

1' in silence

2' to share 2 by 2 this word/image

The experience of the sea  
becoming a Church on the move



# Becoming a synodal Church

Francis, Address *For the Opening of the Synod*, October 9, 2021

And so, brothers and sisters, let us experience this moment of encounter, listening and reflection as a *season of grace* that, in the joy of the Gospel, allows us to recognize at least *three opportunities*. First, that of **moving *not occasionally but structurally* towards a *synodal Church***, an open square where all can feel at home and participate. The Synod then offers us the opportunity **to become a *listening Church***, to break out of our routine and pause from our pastoral concerns in order to stop and listen. To listen to the Spirit in adoration and prayer.

(...) Dear brothers and sisters, may this Synod be a true season of the Spirit! For we need the Spirit, the ever new breath of God, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is moribund, loosens shackles and spreads joy. The Holy Spirit guides us where God wants us to be, not to where our own ideas and personal tastes would lead us. Father Congar, of blessed memory, once said: **“There is no need to create *another Church*, but to create a *different Church*”** (*True and False Reform in the Church*). That is the challenge. **For a “different Church”, a Church open to the newness that God wants to suggest, let us with greater fervour and frequency invoke the Holy Spirit and humbly listen to him, journeying together as he, the source of communion and mission, desires: with docility and courage.**



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

# An appropriation of the call for synodality

- From a written text to a personal and communal experience : a path of integration/appropriation of the call for synodality
- The centrality of experience in the culture of today :
  - the paradigm of Emmaüs
- From a call coming from young people to the call coming from all









**“Synodality is the way of being the Church today according to the will of God, in a dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit.”**

*Pope Francis*

# The synodal methodology

Symbolic image of the Youth Synod" to express synodality : Emmaüs

"Walking together, like Christ with the pilgrims of Emmaüs"

See/Listening/Recognizing - Judge/Interpreting - Act/Discerning/Choosing



## **The synodal style of Jesus**

- Jesus goes to them
  - Jesus asks them a question
  - Jesus begins a dialogue
  - Jesus explains them the Scripture
  - Jesus reaches deep within them
  - Jesus walks with them, even in the wrong direction!
  - Jesus leads them to an encounter with him.
  - This encounter sends them on mission, united with the Christian community.
- The disciple through their journey with Jesus experienced a conversion

# An image from Christus Vivit Together on the same canoe !



CV 201. During the Synod, one of the young auditors from the Samoan Islands spoke of **the Church as a canoe, in which the elderly help to keep on course by judging the position of the stars, while the young keep rowing, imagining what waits for them ahead.** Let us steer clear of young people who think that adults represent a meaningless past, and those adults who always think they know how young people should act. Instead, **let us all climb aboard the same canoe and together seek a better world, with the constantly renewed momentum of the Holy Spirit.**

# Synodality, a dynamic vision of the Church in history

**Synodality is the realization of the Church in history as communion-in-mission**

“Synodality is the dynamic dimension, the historical dimension of ecclesial communion founded by Trinitarian communion, which, appreciating simultaneously the *sensus fidei* of all God's holy faithful people, apostolic collegiality and unity with the Successor of Peter, must animate the conversion and reform of the Church at every level.” *Pope Francis, Message for the Plenary Assembly of the Commission for Latin America, May 26 2022*

➤ **Synodality is the form which the Spirit gives to the People of God in the world (LG §3).** Cf. also International Theological Commission (ITC), Synodality, §72.

# Synodality, a dynamic vision of the Church in history

## → A dynamic vision of the Trinitarian God

- **SYN 49 : Synodality manifests the ‘pilgrim’ character of the Church.** The image of the People of God, gathered from among the nations (*Acts 2,1-9; 15,14*), expresses its social, historical and missionary character, which corresponds to **the condition and vocation of each human person as *homo viator***. The path is the image that clarifies our understanding of the mystery of Christ as the Way that leads to the Father. **Jesus is the way from God to man and from man to God.** The grace-filled event whereby He made Himself a pilgrim by pitching His tent among us (*John 1,14*), goes on in the synodal path of the Church

SYN = Synodality in the life and mission of the Church, International Theological Commission, March 2018  
[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_sinodalita\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html)

# Synodality, a dynamic vision of the Church in history

## → A dynamic vision of the Trinitarian God

49. **“Synodality manifests the 'pilgrim' character of the Church.** The image of the People of God, gathered from among the nations (*Acts 2,1-9; 15,14*), expresses its social, historical and missionary character, which corresponds to the condition and vocation of each human person as *homo viator*. The path is the image that clarifies our understanding of the mystery of Christ as the Way that leads to the Father. Jesus is the way from God to man and from man to God. **The grace-filled event whereby He made Himself a pilgrim by pitching His tent among us (*John 1,14*), goes on in the synodal path of the Church.”**

ITC, *Synodality*, 2 March 2019



➤ **Synodality as an integral ecclesiology has to shape the all life and mission of the Church, all her dimensions**



**With Pope Francis  
“synodality  
now means  
not some of  
the bishops  
some of the  
time but all of  
the Church all  
of the time”**

Ormond Rush,  
“Inverting the  
Pyramid: The  
*Sensus Fidelium*  
in a Synodal  
Church,” *TS*  
(March 2017)



# An understanding of synodality and this synod rooted in the Second Vatican Council

- EC8 “The Synod of Bishops, which is “in some manner the image” of an Ecumenical Council and reflects its “spirit and method””



# A learning Process to articulate primacy, collegiality and synodality

## From a top-down/teaching church to a listening/learning church

Synodality reconceives the distinction between the hierarchy as *ecclesia docens* (the Church that teaches) and the laity as *ecclesia discens* (the Church that learns): ultimately the Church is always primarily learning



# The key notion of circularity

**72.** The entire People of God is challenged by its fundamentally synodal calling. **The circularity of the *sensus fidei* with which all the faithful are endowed, the discernment carried out at the various levels on which synodality works and the authority of those who exercise the pastoral ministry of unity and governance shows the dynamic of synodality.**

This circularity promotes the baptismal dignity and co-responsibility of all, makes the most of the presence in the People of God of charisms dispensed by the Holy Spirit, recognises the specific ministry of Pastors in collegial and hierarchical communion with the Bishop of Rome, and guarantees that synodal processes and events unfold in conformity with the *depositum fidei* and involve listening to the Holy Spirit, for the renewal of the Church's mission.

SYN, ITC

## Listening to the *Sensus Fidei*, Reversing the pyramid Reading chapter 3 of Lumen Gentium through the lenses of chapter 2

“To return to the synodal process, the diocesan phase is very important, since it involves listening to all the baptized, the subject of the **infallible *sensus fidei in credendo***. There is a certain resistance to moving beyond the image of a Church rigidly divided into leaders and followers, those who teach and those who are taught; we forget that God likes to overturn things: as Mary said, “he has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly” (*Lk* 1:52). **Journeying together tends to be more horizontal than vertical**; a synodal Church clears the horizon where Christ, our sun, rises, while erecting monuments to hierarchy covers it. *Discours Pape François aux fidèles du Diocèse de Rome 18 septembre 2021*

# **A kenotic ecclesiology**

## **Synodality as a path of kenosis**

Learning to follow Christ in his paschal journey

Learning another style of leadership

Learning to let go

Learning to embrace vulnerability for synodality

A path of conversion/transformation/metanoïa

A path of reconciliation

## A Church that learns how to “become synodal”

“The Second Vatican Council offers an ideal of synodal and episcopal communion. It still needs to grow, even at the parish level, in terms of what is prescribed. There are parishes that have neither a pastoral council nor a council for economic affairs, even though the Code of Canon Law obliges them to. Synodality is also at stake here.”

*Exclusive Interview with Pope Francis by Guillaume Goubert and Sébastien Maillard in “La Croix” 17 May 2016*  
<https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Pape/Entretien-exclusif-avec-pape-Francois-integralite-2016-05-17-1200760636>

“I would like to add a third word to prayer and closeness, which is so familiar to you: *synodality*. Being Church is being a community that walks together. **It is not enough to *have* a synod, you must *be* a synod.** The Church needs intense internal sharing: a living dialogue between the Pastors and between the Pastors and the faithful.”

*Address of Pope Francis to the Members of the Permanent Synod of the Greek-Catholic Church of Ukraine, 5 July 2019*

## **A call for FCBCO**

**80. All Church institutions, as fully participatory bodies, are called to consider how they might integrate the call to synodality into the ways in which they exercise their functions and their mission, renewing their structures and procedures.**

A special case in point is represented by universities and academic institutions, which will be able to develop research addressing questions of synodality, helping to innovate in the design of educational and formation programs. In particular, theological faculties will be able to deepen the ecclesiological, Christological and Pneumatological insights that synodal experiences and practices bring.



Embracing the synodal  
vision



# A new vision of the Church, a new imagination

- 6 key elements a the basis of the synodal ecclesiology



# 1. A Church, People of God on the Way

- **Together on a pilgrim journey : A Church of missionary pilgrims**

“Through synodality, the Church reveals and configures herself as the pilgrim People of God and as the assembly convoked by the risen Lord.” ICT 42

- **Being a Church People of God supposes that all the faithful are co-responsible in a differentiated manner according to gifts, ministries and charisms.**

“5. The current pontificate inaugurates a new reception of the Second Vatican Council by giving centrality to Chapter II of *Lumen Gentium*. **Francis recalls that "to be Church is to be People of God" (EG 114).** It is an opportunity for what it means to be Church to be deepened. **The notion of the People of God led to the understanding of the Church as a *totality* (EG 17) that lives in a "multiform harmony" (EG 220).** All its members, or *christifideles*, women and men, are empowered by the Spirit to be subjects of rights and action. **One of the great fruits of this way of being Church is that it emphasizes the participation and co-responsibility of all equally**, and strengthens the bond between the *communio fidelium, episcoporum et ecclesiarum*.” *Document from the Commission on Theology of the Synod*



# 1. A Church, People of God on the Way

- “This is important: the way to understand and interpret is **through a pilgrim hermeneutic, one that is always journeying**. The journey that began after the Council? No. The journey that began with the first Apostles and has continued ever since. Once the Church stops, she is no longer Church, but a lovely pious association, for she keeps the Holy Spirit in a cage. **A pilgrim hermeneutic capable of persevering in the journey begun in the Acts of the Apostles.** Otherwise, the Holy Spirit would be demeaned.”

*Pope Francis to the Diocese of Rome Sept. 18 2022*

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/september/documents/20210918-fedeli-diocesiroma.html>

## 1. A Church, People of God on the Way

- Synodality : “This stimulates the generation and implementation of **processes that build us as the People of God** rather than the search for immediate results with quick consequences. “

Letter of Pope Francis to the Church in Germany on the synod's journey

## 2. The Theology of Baptism

- PD 12 “**The members of the People of God are united by Baptism**, and “if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, **yet all share a true equality** with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the Faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ” (LG, no. 32). Therefore, **all the Baptized**, participants in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions by “exercising the variety and ordered richness of their charisms, their vocations and their ministries” **are active subjects of evangelization, both individually and as the entire People of God.**”
- LG 30 "Everything that has been said about the People of God is **addressed equally to laity, religious and clergy**"
- LG 32 "Each member is **at the service of the other members** ... [so that] the Pastors and the other faithful are linked to each other **by mutual need**"
- LG 13 "In the People of God, functions, tasks, ministries, states of life and charisms are organically united in a **multiform network of structural ties and vital relationships**
- **A focus on what we have in common as baptized before any differences** : according to Lumen Gentium, there is a radical equality between all the baptised (LG 10-13; 40-41), we are all co-responsible, we are all invested with the same dignity within the priestly, royal, and prophetic people. This co-responsibility becomes viable in the synodal journey
  - **Retrieving the common priesthood of all the baptized**
  - **Relocating us within structural links with lay faithful and pastors, we are interconnected and interdependent**

## 2. The Theology of Baptism

- PD 12 “**The members of the People of God are united by Baptism**, and “if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, **yet all share a true equality** with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the Faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ” (LG, no. 32). Therefore, **all the Baptized**, participants in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions by “exercising the variety and ordered richness of their charisms, their vocations and their ministries” **are active subjects of evangelization, both individually and as the entire People of God.**”
- LG 30 "Everything that has been said about the People of God is **addressed equally to laity, religious and clergy**"
- LG 32 "Each member is **at the service of the other members** ... [so that] the Pastors and the other faithful are linked to each other **by mutual need**"
- LG 13 "In the People of God, functions, tasks, ministries, states of life and charisms are organically united in a **multiform network of structural ties and vital relationships**

# The theology of baptism as a basis for co-responsibility

- **“If, through the grace of baptism and confirmation, all are empowered to participate in Christ, the Church knows no hierarchy here, for all receive the same fullness of grace and are called to the same vocation of love of God and neighbour.”** ITC, Synodality, §111;119
- **“The shared and manifest conviction is that the foundation of synodality is baptism, not ordination.** All the baptised are called to walk the synodal path together, each offering his or her specific contribution” UISG-USG synthesis
- A focus on what we have in common as baptized before any differences : according to Lumen Gentium, there is a radical equality between all the baptised (LG 10-13; 40-41), we are all co-responsible, we are all invested with the same dignity within the priestly, royal, and prophetic people. This co-responsibility becomes viable in the synodal journey
  - **Retrieving the common priesthood of all the baptized**
  - **Relocating Religious Life within structural links with lay faithful and pastors, we are interconnected and interdependent**

### 3. The Authority of the *Sensus Fidei Fidelium*

- The authority of the *sensus fidei* of the entire People of God, which is “infallible ‘in credendo’” (EG, no. 119)
- the sense of faith in all the faithful (ie the *sensus fidelium*) is as vital a part of the teaching authority of the church (ie the magisterium) as that of the hierarchy.
- **Synodality as a way to retrieve the authority of the *Sensus Fidei***

“**Synodality** is the dynamic dimension, the historical dimension of ecclesial communion founded by Trinitarian communion, which, **appreciating simultaneously the *sensus fidei* of all God's holy faithful people, apostolic collegiality and unity with the Successor of Peter**, must animate the conversion and reform of the Church at every level.” *Pope Francis, Message for the Plenary Assembly of the Commission for Latin America, May 26 2022*



### 3. The Authority of the *Sensus Fidei Fidelium*

- The authority of the *sensus fidei* of the entire People of God, which is “infallible ‘in credendo’” (EG, no. 119)
- the sense of faith in all the faithful (ie the *sensus fidelium*) is as vital a part of the teaching authority of the church (ie the magisterium) as that of the hierarchy.
- **Synodality as a way to retrieve the authority of the *Sensus Fidei***

“**Synodality** is the dynamic dimension, the historical dimension of ecclesial communion founded by Trinitarian communion, which, **appreciating simultaneously the *sensus fidei* of all God's holy faithful people, apostolic collegiality and unity with the Successor of Peter**, must animate the conversion and reform of the Church at every level.” *Pope Francis, Message for the Plenary Assembly of the Commission for Latin America, May 26 2022*

# A theology and practice of the *sensus fidei fidelium* (LG 12)

“6. One of the central elements of this ecclesiology is found in the theology and practice of the *sensus fidei fidelium* (LG 12). The Holy Spirit empowers each *christifideles* to contribute what is proper to the edification of the whole body. The voice of the faithful taken in isolation or that of the bishop alone is not sufficient to manifest the will of God (1 Thess 2:13; LG 35). It is necessary to enter into the dynamics of the *consensus omnium fidelium*. Therefore, a greater theological, pastoral and canonical deepening of *Lumen Gentium* 12 is necessary. Especially, the relationship between the exercise of authority and the *sensus fidei fidelium*, or of the *sensus fidei* and the *consensus omnium fidelium*. But also, between the infallibility of the whole People of God and that of the magisterium; and even the ways of participation and involvement of all the faithful in the processes of consultation, listening, discernment, elaboration and decision taking, in order to achieve the "marvelous harmony of Pastors and Faithful in preserving, practicing and professing the faith received (DV 10)" (DP 13).”

*Document from the Theological commission for the Synod*

## 4. The Action of the Holy Spirit



### **The agency of the Spirit, a practical pneumatology**

"The principle of synodality is the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God." ITC 47

*"In the first place,  
the synodal approach gives priority  
to the Holy Spirit."*

Jos Moons, sj,

*A Comprehensive Introduction to Synodality: Reconfiguring Ecclesiology and Ecclesial Practice (Annals of Theology, The Learned Society of Catholic University of Lublin, 69) 2022.*

## 4. The Action of the Holy Spirit

- **The agency of the Spirit, a practical pneumatology**
- “The principle of synodality is the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God.” ITC 47
- “The Spirit of the Lord indwells each believer and the community, from which it follows that all have the right and duty to participate with their own charisms in the life and mission of the Church” SALA Rossano, « Un excellent point de départ. Invitation à la lecture d’un récent document sur la synodalité », *Revue Lumen Vitae*, 2021/4 (Volume LXXVI), p. 371-378. URL : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-lumen-vitae-2021-4-page-371.htm>

# 5. The Diversity of the Charisms

- **The principle of the participation of all in the life of the Church**
- **“Synodality means that the whole Church is a subject and that everyone in the Church is a subject. The faithful are *σύνοδοι*, companions on the journey. They are called to play an active role inasmuch as they share in the one priesthood of Christ<sup>[62]</sup>, and are meant to receive the various charisms given by the Holy Spirit in view of the common good<sup>[63]</sup>. Synodal life reveals a Church consisting of free and different subjects, united in communion, which is dynamically shown to be a single communitarian subject built on Christ, the corner-stone, and on the Apostles, who are like pillars, built like so many living stones into "a spiritual house" (*cf. 1 Peter 2,5*), "a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit" (*Ephesians 2,22*).”** ITC 57
- Christus Vivit 206. **Youth ministry has to be synodal**; it should involve a “journeying together” that **values “the charisms** that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members, **through a process of co-responsibility**... Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards **a participatory and co-responsible Church**, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. **No one should be excluded or exclude themselves”**.<sup>[111]</sup>

## 6. A relational Church based on a relational anthropology

- **The form of the « with », the « ecclesial we » to be coherent with the mission of the church**
- **Pastoral ministry today requires that relationships be placed at the center, because faith is only transmitted through and in encounters.** Chapter II of Part III of the Final Document of the Synod on Youth (FDSY), entitled "Journeying together in daily life", translates this into the subtitle "**From structures to relationships**".
- **"It is the quality and authenticity of relationships and the life itself of fraternal communities that evangelize more than structures."**
- A relational Church : Fraternity and friendship in the Lord, a Church of brothers and sisters in Christ
- **Reciprocity and mutual complementarity among all ecclesial subjects** (LG 32).  
« It is a matter of adopting "a relational way of viewing the world, which then becomes a form of shared knowledge, vision through the eyes of another and a shared vision of all that exists"[\[145\]](#). For the [Blessed Paul VI](#) true dialogue is spiritual communication[\[146\]](#), which requires specific attitudes: love, respect, trust and prudence[\[147\]](#); "Dialogue thrives on friendship, and most especially on service"[\[148\]](#). Because truth - as [Benedict XVI](#) emphasised - "is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos* and hence communication and communion"[\[149\]](#). ITC 111

# Fratelli Tutti : Our vocation to be a « we »

- “the human family’s innate vocation to fraternity” (FT 26),
- « to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (LS 13),
- **“we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home”** (FT17; 217).
- In spanish “*necesitamos constituirnos en un ‘nosotros’ que habita la casa común*” (literally: “we need to constitute ourselves into a ‘we’ that inhabits the common home”).
  - FT 32 « **we are a global community, all in the same boat**, where one person’s problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that **no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. (...) we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another”**.
  - FT 36. Unless we recover **the shared passion to create a community of belonging and solidarity** worthy of our time, our energy and our resources, the global illusion that misled us will collapse and leave many in the grip of anguish and emptiness. (...) The notion of “every man for himself” will rapidly degenerate into a free-for-all that would prove worse than any pandemic.

# A new style of leadership

- Co-responsability and participation
  - Accompaniement and empowerment
  - A new relationship to the power
  - An exercise of the authority as an empowerment to liberate the liberty.
- Cf FD 71 on *The true sense of authority* :
- « A generative force to activate and liberate the freedom. »



# A new style of leadership

- Vision of a servant and collaborative leadership rooted in a conciliar theology of ministry articulated with the vision of synodality
- Re-positioning of the leader as part of the community, bonded to and not separated from the people he/she serves
  - → « co-partners with the Spirit »
  - → accountability, reflection and supervision
- Co-responsability and participation
- Accompaniment and empowerment
- A new relationship to the power
- An exercise of the authority as an empowerment to liberate the liberty.
- Cf FDSY 71 on ***The true sense of authority*** :  
« A generative force to activate and liberate the freedom. »

# The challenge to foster a common passion and vision for the mission

- **PD . The Pastors, established by God as “authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church,”<sup>16</sup> should not be afraid to listen to the Flock entrusted to them.** The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority, because there is, **at the basis of participation in every synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization** and not the representation of conflicting interests.
- **A new culture of ecclesial consensus on the basis of a *consensus omnium fidelium***, because "in a synodal style, decisions are made by discernment, on the basis of a *consensus* born of common obedience to the Spirit" (*PD* 30).

# Sharing the gift of discernment, fostering communal discernment

- **114.** Communal discernment implies carefully and courageously listening to "the groans" of the Spirit (*cf. Romans 8,26*) which emerge through the explicit or sometimes silent cry that goes up from the People of God: "to listen to God, so that with Him we may hear the cry of His People; to listen to His People until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us"[\[155\]](#). A disciple of Christ must be like a preacher, who "has to contemplate the Word, but he also has to contemplate his people"[\[156\]](#). **Discernment must be carried out in a space of prayer, meditation, reflection and study, which we need to hear the voice of the Spirit; by means of sincere, serene and objective dialogue with our brothers and sisters; by paying attention to the real experiences and challenges of every community and every situation;** in the exchange of gifts and in the convergence of all energies in view of building up the Body of Christ and proclaiming the Gospel; in the melting-pot of feelings and thoughts that enable us to understand the Lord's will; by searching to be set free by the Gospel from any obstacle that might weaken our openness to the Spirit.

*ITC Synodality in the life and mission of the Church* [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20180302\\_sinodalita\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html)

# Breathing together

“In the synodal church, **the pastor mingles with the community in which he walks and of which he is the servant.** He is that close shepherd, immersed in the midst of his flock, who smells the scent of the sheep. And depending on the time and circumstances, he may walk in front of, in the midst of, or behind the flock with which he is united.” Pope Francis



# From a clerical church to a synodal church

- A relational church
- An inclusive church
- A dialogal church
- A discerning church
- A generative church
- A pluricultural church



**Communion - Participation – Mission**  
**Protagonism – Coresponsibility - Discernment**

**Structure/Static → dynamism**

**Monolithic → polyedric**

**Being seated → walking together**

**Earth → sea**

**Cathedral → boat/tent**

**Borders → networks of encounters**

**Vertical → horizontal/circular**

# Towards a new vision of God

- An experience of the Trinitarian God
- A dynamic vision of faith



# Changing our image of God

## Towards a dynamic vision of God walking with us

- Francis, Address to the Clergy, Consecrated People, and Members of Diocesan
- Pastoral Councils, Assisi, 4 October 2013
- To hold a “synod” means to walk together. I think this is truly the most wonderful experience we can have: **to belong to a people walking, journeying through history together with their Lord who walks among us!** We are not alone, we do not walk alone. We are part of the one flock of Christ that walks together.

# A new vision of the Revelation in Dei Verbum

- **God's friendship with humanity**
- §2. In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and make known to us the hidden purpose of His will (see Eph.19) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (see Eph 2:18; 2Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see. **Col 1,15; 1 Tm 1,17**) out of the abundance of His Love speaks to men as friends ( see *Ex 33,11; Gv 15,14-15*) and lives among them (see *Bar 3,38*), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself.

➤ ***From a model of teaching to a model of relationship and communication.***



# The Church on a path of migration





For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

## Purpose: Not to write documents, but...

”

*...to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands and inspire [...] a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel.*

## ...all led by the same overarching Question

”

**2. How does this “journeying together”, which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church? (PD2)**

## Experiencing the joy of synodality...

”

*3. Along the way they experienced the joy of meeting as brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing what resonated within them from listening to the Word, and reflecting together on the future of the Church based on the impetus of the Preparatory Document (PD).*

## ...brings a greater desire for synodality !

”

*...This has nourished in them the desire for an increasingly synodal Church: synodality has ceased to be an abstract concept for them and has become a concrete experience; they have tasted its flavor and want to continue to do so. “Through this process we have discovered that synodality is a way of being Church – in fact, it is the way of being Church’. ‘The Holy Spirit is asking us to be more synodal’” (EC England and Wales).*

# A short-term & long-term process

”

*.98. The second, clearly at the service of the first, is the one that focuses our attention on the events of the Continental Stage that we are experiencing*

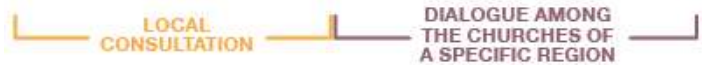
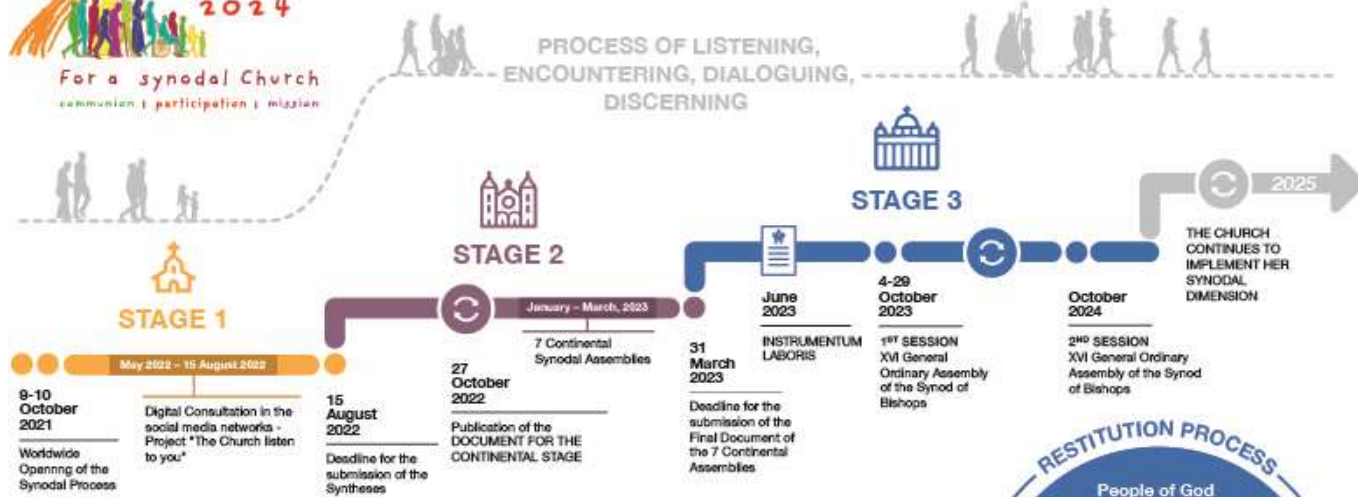
”

*98. The first is the long-term horizon, in which synodality takes the form of a perennial call to personal conversion and reform of the Church.*



# The Synodal Process 2021 - 2024

PROCESS OF LISTENING,  
ENCOUNTERING, DIALOGUING,  
DISCERNING



ICON INDEX

- Local churches
- Bishops Conference
- Universal Church
- Document
- Restitution Process



“Enlarge the space of your tent”

(Is 54:2)

**WORKING DOCUMENT  
FOR THE CONTINENTAL STAGE**



GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD

# Contact

---

General Secretariat for Synod of Bishops

Via della Conciliazione 34 - 00120 Città del Vaticano

Phone: (+39) 06 698 84821 / 84324

[synodus@synod.va](mailto:synodus@synod.va)

[www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)

