



Synod on Synodality Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What do the terms “Synod” and “Synodality” mean?

The term “Synod,” an ancient and venerable word in the Tradition of the Church, is understood to mean the path along which the People of God walk together. “Synodality” describes the walking together of all the baptized as we listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit in discerning the will of God for how to accomplish the mission of the Church.

What is the Synod on Synodality?

The Synod on Synodality is a worldwide, two-year process of praying, listening, dialogue, and discerning. The local diocesan listening phase of the Synod seeks to gather the faithful in small groups to share their experiences, hopes, and concerns for the Church. This is an opportunity to hear and learn from diverse voices and to discern how God calls us to journey forward together to fulfill our Catholic mission in the third millennium. Success of this synodal process hinges on participating, sharing, and listening as the Holy Spirit speaks through those around us, particularly those with experiences and stories different than our own.

What is the Synod timeline?

The first phase is designed as a listening phase in local Churches. This listening phase in the Archdiocese of Louisville takes place January through May 2022. Input gathered from all listening sessions and related sources will be collected by the Archdiocese, condensed into a synthesis of learnings, and submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June 2022. USCCB will integrate all diocesan syntheses into a comprehensive summary of learnings and submit to the Holy See in March 2023, where it will then be assimilated with similar syntheses from around the world, ready for study at the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2023.

Who can participate in the Synodal Process?

Pope Francis invites the worldwide Church to share their voices in this synodal process. This includes priests, deacons, women and men religious, and the lay faithful. Opportunities within the Archdiocese of Louisville will include consultations within parishes, religious congregations, lay movements and associations, schools and universities, social outreach organizations, ecumenical movements, and other groups. All who are baptized in Christ are welcome to participate, particularly those on the periphery and who often feel distanced from the Church.

How can people participate in the Synodal Process?

In the months January through May 2022, all are invited to participate in a local listening session hosted at a parish or other local gathering. These in-person consultations will be announced and promoted as

dates and locations are confirmed. In April and May, an online opportunity will be made available for personal feedback from those unable to attend an in-person session, however, the greatest opportunity and gift from this process will be manifested in the conversations people have with one another.

What is involved in the local Synodal Process?

The synodal process at the local level must involve accessibility, cultural awareness, inclusion, discernment, respect, accurate synthesis, transparency, and fairness. The process should also reflect Pope Francis' vision for the practice of synodality, including those attitudes outlined by the Holy Father as instrumental to promoting genuine listening and dialogue. Being synodal requires time for sharing, courage in speaking, and humility in listening. Dialogue leads us to newness, openness to conversion and change. Our local involvement in the Synod is a time to dream and "spend time with the future."

What is the role of the Archbishop, priests and deacons in the Synodal Process?

The fullness of the worldwide synodal process is only possible with the involvement of the local Churches, requiring personal involvement of the Archbishop, whose primary role is to facilitate the synodal experience of the whole People of God on the journey to a more Synodal Church. The Archbishop will seek participation and feedback throughout the Archdiocese from parishes, clergy, religious communities, lay movements, schools, ecumenical groups, and all who are on the periphery.

Priests and deacons can promote awareness of the synodal nature of the Church and the meaning of synodality in the parishes, ministries, and movements that they serve. Priests and deacons are also called to support, encourage, promote, and enable listening opportunities of the synodal process throughout the Archdiocese.

Will a summary document be prepared following the local Synodal Process?

The worldwide Synod on Synodality is a first-of-its-kind opportunity to gather input from millions of diverse peoples from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds, with the objective to blend their experiences and dreams into a unified vision for the Church we are called to be. To accomplish this, each diocese is to prepare a summary of learnings ("synthesis") reflecting diverse local views, not simply those most frequently cited, and should highlight points that open new horizons, inspiring original points of view. The document should convey the energy and vitality of the local Synod process, such as participants' experiences, perspectives, joys, and challenges. Conversely, the synthesis should not focus on reporting statistics, rankings, graphs, survey results, or data lists; nor should it be a cumulative recapitulation of input or comments received during Synod consultations.

How can people learn more about the Synod on Synodality?

Parishes will be encouraged to distribute various forms of print and electronic updates on the Synod progress and local opportunities to participate. Frequent stories, updates, and information will appear in the Archdiocese of Louisville's weekly newspaper *The Record*. Periodic email and social media communications will also be distributed from the Archdiocese. Synod resources, communications, and other updates are available online to view or download through the Archdiocese's website at www.archlou.org/synod-2022.