

Synod Questions

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

October 10, 2021 – October 31, 2023

There are a multitude of questions asked in the Preparatory Document provided by the Office of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. It would not be possible to discuss all of the questions in any one meeting – perhaps even in a series of meetings. As such, the diocesan synod team has narrowed the questions and provided them in a manner that the average Catholic can understand.

Pre-Questions

1. How has the Church (either universal, diocesan or parish) been important in your life? Or why is the Church important to you? How has the Church community accompanied you on your journey of faith?
2. How or why has the Church been an obstacle to the growth of your faith?
3. Has the Church hurt in you in any way? How?
4. What do you believe the Holy Spirit is asking us, the Church, to do today?
5. How does belonging to the Catholic Church help you?
6. How should the Catholic Church relate to the world around her?

Companions on the Journey

1. Who belongs to our parish community? Does it reflect the diversity of our local civil community?
2. Who is missing from our parish community? Why?
3. Who does our parish community ignore? Why?

Called to Listen

1. How does God speak to us through the voices of those we sometimes ignore?
2. Does our parish listen to the voice of laity? To women? To young people? How?
3. How well does our parish listen to those on the peripheries? To those who feel that they do not belong or cannot belong?

Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission

1. What is the mission of baptized Catholics? Personally? Communally?
2. Are there areas of mission that our parish ignores? What are they? Why are those areas ignored?
3. How does your parish help members to live out their service to society? To be missionaries?

Dialogue in Church and Society

1. How does your parish provide opportunities for diverse peoples to come together for dialogue about the Church and the Church's relationship to society?
2. How does your parish listen to the voices of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from society?
3. How does your parish serve the needs of minorities, the poor, the sick, and those generally excluded from society?

Speaking Out

1. Do you feel you are able to speak up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in your parish community? Why or why not?
2. Does your parish have a relationship with local media? How?
3. Who speaks on behalf of your parish community? How are the chosen?

Celebration

1. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide the common life and the mission of your parish community?
2. How can we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy?
3. What keeps most people, the majority of Catholics, from participating at Mass on a weekly basis?
4. What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?

Ecumenism (The Church's relationship with Other Christian Communities)

1. How does your parish relate to the other Christian churches or communities? Should more be done?
2. What are the fruits of these relationships?
3. What are the difficulties?

Authority and Participation

1. How is authority or governance exercised within your parish community?
2. Does your parish have a pastoral plan with set goals and strategies to reach those goals? How were you been made aware of it?
3. Do the lay faithful in your parish understand that they are co-responsible for the well-being of the parish?
4. How are the lay faithful invited to share their talents with the parish and surrounding community?
5. How is synodality (consultation of the community) practiced in your parish? At parish pastoral council? Other bodies?
6. What suggestions do you have for fostering a more synodal approach in your parish?

Discerning and Deciding

1. How are decisions made in your parish community? How could this process be improved?
2. What tools or processes does your parish employ to promote transparency and accountability?

Forming Ourselves in Synodality

1. How does your parish form people to "walk together," to listen to one another, to participate in the mission of the Church, and to engage in ongoing dialogue?

Understanding the Eucharist

1. Do you believe that the Eucharist is the true body and blood of Christ? Why or why not?
2. Why do you come or not come to Mass?
3. What three things would you like to change in the celebration of the Mass?
4. What does the reception of Holy Communion mean to you?
5. How, when and why do you invite others to join you for the celebration of Mass?

Other Input

1. What is the best part of belonging to your parish community?
2. What would you most like to see change in your parish community?
3. If you could offer the Holy Father, Pope Francis, one bit of advice, what would it be?
4. Would you like your parish to conduct this type of consultative meeting once or twice each year?
5. Is there anything else you would like to offer?

Synod Prayer

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.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.