



From the *Instrumentum laboris* A.1 Characteristic signs of a synodal Church

Questions and resources for leaders generated by Debbie Stollery, President of the Pentecost Vigil Project, Inc.

1. **Founded on the recognition of a common dignity deriving from Baptism, which makes all who receive it sons and daughters of God, members of the family of God, and therefore brothers and sisters in Christ, inhabited by the one Spirit and sent to fulfill a common mission.**
 - a. How is your parish/diocese enabling the baptized to appropriate this identity more fully?
2. **Identified by its communion, the achievement of which is in itself part of the mission.**
 - a. To what extent are the principles in Pope St. John Paul II's spirituality of communion in practice. See [*Novo Millenio Inuente*](#) #43ff
3. **Recognized by its recognition of the need to become increasingly synodal in institutions, structures and procedures.**
 - a. How is your parish/diocese forming its leaders in synodal mindsets and skill sets?
4. **Is a listening Church, following the example of how Jesus operated.**
 - a. How often do your leaders reflect on Jesus as listener? Here's a nudge: "[Jesus Actively Listened.](#)"
5. **Desires to be humble, and knows it must ask forgiveness and has much to learn.**
 - a. How do your leaders develop humility?
 - i. Here's one approach: [A Litany of Humility as part of an Examination of Conscience](#)
 - ii. A consideration of [humility and leadership](#)
 - b. For what do you as an individual ecclesial leader need to ask forgiveness? And for what do you as an ecclesial leader need to ask forgiveness for on behalf of the entire Church?
 - i. For a look at some of [what has been done](#)
 - ii. Forgiveness as a [leadership trait](#)
 - c. How will you make sure that your parish/diocese continues to learn and grow in leadership skills? Contact the [Pentecost Vigil Project](#) for help in determining your first or next steps in this area:
6. **Seeks out encounter and dialogue as a matter of course.**
 - a. Is your parish/diocese equipped with concepts and skills to create a culture of encounter? For an example, see the Diocese of Cleveland's [formation plan](#) for creating a culture of encounter.
 - b. To what degree are your parish/diocesan leaders formed in the [skill of dialogue](#)?
7. **Practices encounter and dialogue with believers of other religions, cultures and societies within and outside the Church.**
 - a. Have parish and diocesan leaders been [formed for ecumenical encounters and dialogue](#)?
8. **Embraces diversity, finding unity in Christ and mission, not in uniformity of thought or Creed; is constantly helping people move from I to we.**
 - a. How is this [understood](#) by local and diocesan leaders? How is this message shared?

9. **Looks to be open, welcoming and embracing all peoples.**
 - a. How much work has been done to discover who does not feel welcomed or embraced by your parish/diocese? Start with "[Enlarge the Space of your Tent](#)"
 - b. How do those who feel excluded and unwelcomed [come to feel included](#), according to them?
10. **Confronts honestly and fearlessly the call to a deeper understanding of the relationship between love and truth...sometimes being called to hold these two in tension.**
 - a. How are your parish/diocesan leaders grappling with this tension? Here' an [article](#) to start the conversation.
11. **Ability to manage tensions without them crushing them.**
 - a. What [mindsets](#) and [skillsets](#) are being developed in ecclesial leaders to increase this capacity?
12. **Embraces a healthy restlessness of incompleteness.**
 - a. How are your parish/diocesan leaders [being introduced to this concept](#) and its related [skills?](#)
13. **Unceasingly nourishes itself at the Eucharistic table.**
 - a. How much attention is paid to the nourishing/[transformative quality](#) of the celebration of the Eucharist?
14. **Practices discernment in common.**
 - a. How are parish/diocesan leaders being [formed](#) in this practice?
 - b. When/where is this [already in practice?](#)

All of the links provided here were active as of 9-15-2023. None are intended as definitive. All are "starters" for those who want a simple place to begin to become more synodal in each of these areas. I make no representation that these are complete, definitive, one-and-done, or "just what you need" in your individual circumstance. They are just what I said they are: starters. Search engines, artificial intelligence, and of course, [accompaniment by a guide](#) can all help personalize your #synodjourney.

Our prayer for you is that you "get started" on the #synodjourney and our invitation is to use the resources of the [Pentecost Vigil Project](#) along the way!

Debbie