



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

“Conversations in the Spirit”

A simple experience of the Vatican’s new process for prayerful listening

Note: In October 2023, Catholics from around the world gathered in Rome for 4 weeks of prayerful listening and discernment. The 364 participants included cardinals, bishops, lay men and women and religious. Pope Francis has called the listening process that they used “Conversations in the Spirit.” For two years prior to the October gathering, the Church held similar listening sessions in parishes around the world. It is believed to be the largest information gathering process in known history. The best way to learn about this process is to experience it in a small group.

The Main Questions:

Why did you first come to this parish or group?

Why do you choose to stay?

Who is missing?

Gather... in small groups of 12 or less. Select a facilitator to serve as timekeeper. Select a recorder to take notes. Leave an empty chair for the Holy Spirit. Begin with introductions.

Step 1: Pray Together The Official Synod 2023 prayer found on the back of this page.

Step 2: Silently Read the Main Questions (above) and Reflect 3 minutes of silence

- What is your personal experience (or lack of) in this area? Reflect and write in silence.
- Identify your own personal stories. Avoid second-hand information, social media info, etc.

Step 3: Share and Listen Each person speaks for a maximum of 3 minutes

- Tell a story of your experience in this area. (take turns, listen with open hearts)

Step 4: Silent Reflection, Listen to the Spirit 3 more minutes of silence

- Reflect: How has another perspective influenced your own? (reflect and write in silence)
- Ponder: Is the Spirit calling me to new paths?
- Is the Spirit calling my parish or group to new paths?

Step 5: Share and Listen Each person speaks for an additional 2 minutes

- Share: How has another perspective influenced your own? (show that you have listened deeply)
- In what ways may the Spirit be calling you to new paths?
- In what ways may the Spirit be calling your parish or group to new paths?

Step 6: Prayerful Discernment for Action 20 minutes

- As a group, listen deeply to the Spirit, and identify the key issues that have been surfaced.
- As a group, choose 1 step that your parish or group could take to Journey Forward
- As a group, choose a way to share your discernment suggestions with parish leadership

Step 7: Pray and Respond

- Pray: Close with any prayer of gratitude.
- Respond: Submit your summary to the parish or diocesan Synod contact person.

Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus

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 partially 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.

Use this space for notes.