



## HOW Can We Be a Synodal Church in MISSION?

### The 20 themes of the October Synod 2023 Synthesis Report

The final Synthesis Report of the October 2023 gathering is made up of 3 Topics with 20 themes. You can read the full report at: <https://www.synod.va/en.html>. The topic and theme titles are listed below. The bullet points are edited summaries provided by the Pentecost Vigil Project. Permission granted for non-profit use.

#### **Part 1: The Face of the Synodal Church**

##### **1) Synodality: Experience and Understanding**

- What is Synodality?
- Why is it important in the Church today?

##### **2) Gathered and Sent by the Trinity**

- We must ALL, as a collective Body of Christ, listen to the Spirit's guidance.
- "Conversations in the Spirit" is a tool that allows the Spirit to speak through all.

##### **3) Entering the Community of Faith: Christian Initiation**

- We are all baptized by one Spirit into one Body.
- Our Baptism calls us all to listen to the Spirit and to live the Gospel.

##### **4) People in Poverty, Protagonists of the Church's Journey**

- The preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christian faith.
- The Church must address the causes of poverty and exclusion.

##### **5) A Church "out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation"**

- The Church lives in an increasingly multicultural and multireligious context.
- This requires building bridges, listening, learning, especially with migrants & refugees.

##### **6) The Eastern Churches and Latin Church Traditions**

- There are increasing refugee and migrant shifts of Eastern-rite Catholics into Latin-rite areas.
- There is a need for Latin-rite Churches to help Eastern-rite Churches preserve their identity.

##### **7) On the Road Towards Christian Unity**

- Baptism constitutes the foundation of ecumenism.
- There can be no synodality without an ecumenical dimension.

#### **Part II: All Disciples, All Missionaries**

##### **8. Church is Mission**

- The Church does not "have" a Mission, the Church "IS" mission: We ARE witnesses to the Gospel.
- Baptism gives all disciples the responsibility for the Mission of the Church

## **9. Women in the Life and Mission of the Church**

- Churches across the globe request that the contributions of women be recognized and valued.
- Synodality requires a Church with men and women in dialog without exclusion and competition.

## **10. Consecrated Life and Lay Associations and Movements: A Charismatic Sign**

- The Church can learn from the synodal life practices of faith communities throughout history.
- Consecrated Communities and Movements often are first to sense the call for historical change.

## **11. Deacons and Priests in a Synodal Church**

- The ordained are called to serve, welcoming and listening to all, within a life of personal prayer.
- Clericalism is an obstacle to Mission. It is a view of the divine call as an exercise of power instead of service.

## **12. The Bishop in Ecclesial Communion**

- A Bishop is at the service of the People of God, primarily responsible for proclaiming the Gospel.
- Bishops are called to be an example of synodality, to influence others to adopt the process.

## **13. The Bishop of Rome in the College of Bishops**

- Promoting the unity of all Christians is an essential ministry of the Bishop of Rome.
- The reform of the Roman Curia is an important aspect of the Church's synodal journey.

## **Part III: Weaving Bonds, Building Communities**

### **14. A synodal approach to formation**

- Formation must be undertaken *synodally*: The Church formed together as we journey together.
- The goal is to enable all to actively participate in the Church's Mission.

### **15. Ecclesial Discernment and Open Questions**

- The experience of "Conversations in the Spirit" was enriching for all the Synod participants.
- This approach enables careful consideration of matters that are controversial within the Church.

### **16. Towards a Listening and Accompanying Church**

- Being deeply listened to is a recognition of dignity and a powerful way of engaging people.
- The Church wants to listen to all, not just those who can most easily make their voices heard.

### **17. Mission in the Digital Environment**

- Digital culture is a crucial dimension of the Church's witness in contemporary culture.
- Young people are best suited to carry out the Church's mission in the digital environment, and to help the rest of the community to become familiar with its dynamics

### **18. Structures for Participation**

- Since all Baptized are co-responsible for Mission, all must contribute to discerning steps to reform local communities and the Church as a whole.
- Discernment and decision-making councils, must provide for the presence of men and women who are genuine witnesses in ordinary life

### **19. Groupings of Churches within the Communion of the Whole Church**

- Episcopal Conferences played a decisive role in the first phase of the synodal process.
- These national and continental bodies can help overcome the risk of uniformity and centralization in Church governance.

### **20. The Synod of Bishops and Ecclesial Assemblies**

- This Synod experience has made visible, the essential links between the synodal life of the Church (participation of all), the collegial dimension (bishops' care for the Church), and the primatial dimension (the Bishop of Rome.)
- It is not enough to create new structures of co-responsibility. Personal conversion to a missional synodality at all levels is essential.