



Encountering Christ through the Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

CONSULTATION TEMPLATE

Synod Prayer

ALL

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.

Intro

PRESIDER

Thank you for your presence here today/tonight as we participate in this synodal process initiated for the Universal Church by the Holy Father and for our local Church by Archbishop Lori. This consultation is part of a process that will lead up to the October 2023 Synod of Bishops, after which will be implemented the feedback from consultations such as these held throughout the world.

It should be noted from the outset that this process of listening and engaging is not about the teachings of the Church. Those will not change. Instead, it is about responding to Pope Francis' invitation to reflect on a theme integral to the Church's life and mission: "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." Those participating in this conversation will have an opportunity to respond to the fundamental question of how each of us, faithful to our vocations, walks together in a continuous dialogue of truth and love and in fulfillment of the Church's mission. This journey follows the Church's "renewal" proposed by the Second Vatican Council. By journeying together

and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open herself to mission. “Communion, participation and mission” are inseparable keys to this process and are to remain at the heart of our conversations throughout this process.

While this consultation is part of a specific process, our Church has always been synodal, including here in our Archdiocese where we have been invited to participate in the Church’s response to racial injustice and our ongoing evangelization-based parish planning initiative. Therefore, I would invite you to see this is a dialogue begun for this Synodal Process, but also one that should be ongoing and continue, whether formally or informally, among individuals or groups.

While it is easy for us to reflect on the fundamental question that will be posed to us in this gathering, let us remember that we do so in times of global tragedy, as evidenced by the COVID 19 pandemic, amidst inequalities and injustices and with the cry of the poor and the earth ever present among us. Within this context, synodality represents the path by which the Church can be renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit, by listening together afresh to what God has revealed to us in Christ Jesus. It compels us to imagine the future of the Church and to be a prophetic witness to the human family, which needs to be united around a common goal. Before we begin our reflection on the fundamental question at the heart of this Synodal process, let us do so prayerfully through the reading of scripture followed by a moment of quiet reflection.

Scripture reading

Lay Faithful

First Reading:

- Acts 10:1-48
- Acts 2:1-11

Responsorial Psalm:

- Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34
- Ps 33:10-15

Second Reading:

- Gal 5:1-24
- 1 Cor 12:4-11
- 1 Cor 12:12-26
- 1 Cor 12:27-31

Gospel:

- Lk 24:13-35
- Mt 5:13-16
- Jn 16:12-15
- Lk 8:4-15
- Lk 8:16-18a, 19-21

Focus Question

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take to grow in “journeying together?”

In order to respond, you are invited to:

- a) Ask yourselves what experiences in your particular Church the fundamental question calls to mind;
- b) Reread these experiences in greater depth: What joys did they provoke? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds have they brought to light? What insights have they elicited?
- c) Gather the fruits to share: Where, in these experiences, does the voice of the Spirit resound? What is he asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for change, the steps to be taken? Where do we register a consensus? What paths are opening up for one particular Church?

It is often very fruitful for participants to reflect on the journey of their local community up until now. What has been the history of the faith life of the community? How has the community travelled to where they are now? How has God been present? Recollecting the past together often helps to build up the community and guide its path forward.

Note: to help people explore this fundamental question more fully, 10 themes highlighting significant aspects of “lived synodality” can be found in the Preparatory Document, located under “parish resources” on the Archdiocesan synod webpage.

It is helpful to remember that “journeying together” occurs in two deeply interconnected ways. First, we journey together with one another as the People of God. Next, we journey together as the People of God with the entire human family. These two perspectives enrich one another and are helpful for our common discernment towards deeper communion and more fruitful mission.

Usually, each small group will have a note taker. Once the group dialogue has taken place, participants should review and share about their experience of the process within their small group. How was their experience? What were the ups and downs? What new and refreshing insights might they have discovered? What have they learned about the synodal way of proceeding? How was God present and at work during their time together?

Participants should then decide on the feedback they wish to communicate to the organizing/facilitation team. The guiding questions can be used as a basis for the feedback provided.

All participants can then come together to conclude the gathering. One representative from each small group can briefly share about the experience of the group. The participants should be informed about the next stage of the Synodal Process (regional consultations in Jan/Feb '22), so that they know their input will contribute to the whole Church. It is recommended that the gathering conclude with a prayer or song of thanksgiving.

Concluding Prayer/Song

		ALL
A Mighty Fortress is our God	EIN FESTE BURG	public domain
Anthem	Tom Conry	OCP
As a Fire is Meant for Burning	BEACH SPRING	GIA
Celebración de Unidad	Eleazar Cortés	OCP
Church of God, Elect and Glorious	HYFRYDOL	Hope Publishing
Companions on the Journey	Carey Landry	OCP
Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race	TALLIS' CANON	GIA
In Christ There is No East or West	McKEE	public domain
O Christ the Great Foundation	AURELIA	GIA
Somos Una Iglesia	Eleazar Cortés	OCP
Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We are the Body of Christ	Cortez/Hurd	OCP
The Church's One Foundation	OPTATUS VOTIS OMNIUM	public domain
They'll Know We are Christians by our Love	Peter Scholtes	FEL Publications
We are Many Parts	Marty Haugen	GIA
We are the Body of Christ	Jaime Cortez	OCP